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Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

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Governor Requests Major Disaster Declaration

January 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today requested a major disaster declaration for seven Maine counties impacted by the ice storm and subsequent weather events that began Dec. 11, 2008 and ended Dec. 29, 2008. As a result of a thorough inventory of damage, the Governor believes the threshold for federal assistance has been met for Public Assistance, including Direct Federal Assistance, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster assistance for the following counties: Androscoggin, Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York Counties.

If granted, the federal government would reimburse towns, counties and State agencies for 75 percent of costs incurred in response to the winter event.

"The winter weather that began with the ice storm and continued with high winds and snow greatly strained resources throughout these counties," said Governor Baldacci. "Local, county, and State officials coordinated with utility crews and many individuals and organizations to protect lives and property. We are thankful that no lives were lost. This series of weather events brought out the best in Maine people, but the fact remains that there were great costs associated with the response and recovery. I hope that federal resources will be available soon to alleviate financial stress to these public entities."

The Governor stressed that State officials continue to compile information in support of possible further requests for recovery funds.

Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency on Dec. 11 that allowed power crews and other resources to pre-deploy for the storm. He later amended his original declaration to ensure fuel oil delivery vehicles could remain operating. He visited affected areas in York and Lincoln counties, as well as Portland and South Portland.

The text of the request follows.

January 2, 2009

The Honorable George W. Bush

President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. Arthur Cleaves, Regional Administrator

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FEMA Region One

99 High Street, 6th Floor

Boston, MA, 02110

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for Androscoggin, Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York Counties in the State of Maine as a result of a severe winter storm, significant icing, high winds, blowing and drifting snow and coastal flooding which has impacted the State December 11, 2008 through December 29, 2008.

According to the National Weather Service, this incident began with a major winter storm which brought a mixture of snow, sleet, and freezing rain to Maine from the morning of December 11th to the morning of December 12th. The greatest impact in the state was in coastal and adjacent counties of the state where a significant icing occurred. Following the ice event, recovery and restoration efforts were negatively impacted by additional winter weather events that passed through the state.

The ice storm was caused by an area of low pressure that moved northeastward along a stalled frontal boundary off the East Coast. Near ground level, cold air from eastern Canada funneled southward into the region on northerly winds. Southerly winds at higher levels of the atmosphere brought warmer (above freezing) air in aloft. Across southern sections of Maine, the thermal structure of the atmosphere was conducive to produce freezing rain and sleet event. A mixture of precipitation snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain began Thursday morning across the state. However, as the northerly winds strengthened at the surface and southerly winds strengthened aloft, the precipitation changed to mostly a mix of sleet and freezing rain across western Maine. The freezing rain and sleet continued overnight and into Friday morning before ending. While "melted" precipitation amounts across much of southwestern and coastal Maine ranged from 1 to 3 inches, ice accretion to trees and wires in the coastal counties generally ranged from about a half inch to about an inch. This weight of the ice caused branches to snap, and trees to either snap or uproot, and brought down power lines and poles across the region. Hundred of thousands of utility customers lost power during the event, with some customers without power for more than a week.

The first obstacle to recovery efforts occurred on Wednesday, December 17. Snow developed around midnight and continued into the afternoon. Accumulations across coastal sections of western Maine generally ranged from 1 to 4 inches. On Friday, December 19, a weakening area of low pressure in the Ohio Valley and a secondary low developing off the New Jersey coast brought a moderate to heavy snowfall to southern Maine. Snowfall amounts generally ranged from 6 to 9 inches across York County.

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Blizzard conditions and over three feet of snow impacted many areas statewide on December 21 and 22. Winds of near 60 mph were reported. On Christmas Eve, once again snow and icy conditions overspread the State, and continued to obstruct recovery and debris removal efforts.

During the operational period beginning December 11, over 44% of the state was without power, including the metropolitan areas of Portland and South Portland. Maine's electric utilities had reached out to mutual aid resources before the storm, but because of the widespread emergency conditions in all of northern New England and New York, resources were scarce. Crews eventually responded from as far away as Michigan, and from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Canada. Over 40 shelters and warming centers were opened by the American Red Cross and community volunteers, serving 600 to 1,000 people for overnight stays and warm meals. All State offices were closed on December 12, as were innumerable town and county offices and businesses. The oil terminals in South Portland were without power, unable to supply fuel oil and gasoline to distributors. The Department of Health and Human Services activated their crisis plan on December 12, reaching out to the vulnerable individuals and families they serve and ensure their emergency needs were met. Ferries were closed due to lack of power at terminals. Phone service was sporadically interrupted in many locations do to failing batteries or generators, including the entire island of Islesboro, creating a dangerous communications blackout for that isolated community.

As power began to be restored and shelters closed, additional waves of winter weather hampered response and debris clearance efforts. During this incident period, public safety and public works agencies across the state were stretched to the limit to open roads and ensure safe conditions for travel, commerce and power restoration. Persistent winter weather conditions hampered debris clearance operations, and sporadic power outages continued to disrupt business, government and family activities. On December 22nd, state offices were again closed for part of the day, with many county and local offices following suit. 5,000 businesses and households were again out of power December 22, and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day saw 14,000 outages.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. I directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Thursday December 11, 2008 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. The State Emergency Operations Center likewise activated December 11, and remained activated through December 18. State and County Emergency Management Agencies remained on alert throughout the incident period.

On December 11 I declared that a State of Emergency existed in the State of Maine, and took steps to ensure that Federal Department of Transportation Hours of Service were relaxed, so that additional power restoration crews from Canada and elsewhere in the United States could travel to the state and begin restoration. On December 12 I amended the order to extend Hours of Service waiver to fuel oil transportation and delivery vehicles, and to ensure that all State resources were available to respond to the worsening emergency conditions.

On December 14, 2008, I requested a federal emergency declaration to assist in the ongoing emergency response. This request was granted for Emergency Protective Measures (Category B), Direct Federal

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Assistance on December 15, designated as FEMA-3298-EM. Direct Federal Assistance is likewise included in this request.

On December 18, 2008, I requested a joint Federal, State, and local survey of the impacted areas. Initial assessments indicated the significant costs were incurred in emergency protective measures and debris clearance. Infrastructure damage was also noted in the affected counties. The requested Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for public damage began December 29, 2008. Town and state agency reports of damages, verified by the PDA, equate to $4,231,955, $3.32 per capita statewide.

Thankfully, no storm-related deaths were reported during this period in Maine. However, the Maine Center for Disease Control reported an alarming spike in carbon monoxide poisoning cases during the prolonged power outages. A number of homes have also been impacted; we are currently working with our volunteer and service agency community to identify avenues of assistance for individuals with unmet needs. We also know that our business community lost significant revenue, with this event falling as it has during the busiest retail time of the year.

State and local budgets, already adversely affected by a nationwide recession and crippling fuel costs earlier in the year, have been exhausted by the convergent effects of six major disasters since May of 2006. A record snow year of 2007-2008, for which no federal assistance was received, further drained local budgets across the state. Budget shortfalls in the State of Maine have required emergency spending curtailments and severe cuts to State services in the current fiscal year and project for the coming biennium.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance (to include Direct Federal Assistance); Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster assistance (as applicable under the Public Assistance Program) at this time. I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property.

I intend to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosure B. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure C.

Damage assessments are ongoing for both public and individual assistance. If the need warrants, I intend to request additional assistance.

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.208, the State of Maine agrees that it will, with respect to Direct Federal Assistance:

Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work;

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Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work;

Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State Agreement; and

Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

In addition, I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

State, local and private resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster include: repairs to and debris removal on the Federal Aid Highway System and state highways, debris removal and emergency assistance to local governments, support to public utilities for power restoration, and damage assessment by the Maine Department of Transportation; alerting, warning, and traffic control by the Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation and county and local public safety agencies; support to County emergency operations centers and to public utilities by the Maine Department of Conservation; liaison with public utilities by the Maine Public Utilities Commission; public health and client response activities by the Department of Health and Human Services; emergency assistance to private citizens by local responders and volunteer agencies; shelter operations and crisis counseling by the American Red Cross; shelter management by local officials and volunteers; debris removal and road clearance in support of power restoration by local public works departments; emergency coordination and damage assessment by the Maine Emergency Management Agency and affected County Emergency Management Agencies; emergency public information by Maine211; and assistance to affected families by social service and voluntary agencies.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total State and local expenditures are expected to exceed one million dollars ($1,000,000) in accordance with the table in Enclosure D.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

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Governor Baldacci Recognizes Galen Cole

January 2, 2009

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented an Aide-de-Camp pin to Galen Cole of Bangor, recognizing Cole's long history as a supporter of veterans in Maine. The event took place at the Galen Cole Family Foundation in Bangor.

Aides-de-Camp serve as a veterans' advisory group to the Governor and the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management.

"Galen Cole has served Maine and the nation in times of war and peace, and he continues to contribute to the welfare of our State," said Governor Baldacci. "He's deeply committed to ensuring that we never forget the sacrifices of our soldiers, and I look forward to gaining his advice as an Aide-de-Camp so that as a State, we can continue to provide the best quality services to all Maine veterans."

The Governor said that honoring Galen Cole's work at the Foundation is important because the Foundation is just one of the many ways in which Cole strives to improve Maine's future and remember its past. The Galen Cole Family Foundation challenges young people to raise their aspirations.

Cole also works with youth and adults to honor veterans. The Foundation has funded events to honor veterans, and has donated items for veterans' remembrances and memorials across Maine communities. A number of war memorials are located on site at the Cole Land Transportation Museum.

Cole is a veteran himself. He nearly lost his life serving his country in World War II.

"Galen has dedicated time, resources and his considerable efforts and expertise to ensure that generations of Mainers are able to honor our veterans for their incredible service," said Governor Baldacci. "It's fitting, then, that we join to honor Galen for all his work. He hasn't sought the spotlight, but he deserves our thanks and recognition. As an Aide-de-Camp, Galen will be among my closest and trusted advisors as my Administration weighs issues of importance to our veterans community."

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Milo Businesses Receive SBA Assistance

January 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci received notification from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) that his request for an SBA Economics Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) declaration has been approved for the Town of Milo. The Governor made the request to help Milo businesses impacted by the Sept. 14, 2008, fire that destroyed a block of the downtown area.

"This assistance, combined with $65,000 of Community Development Block Grants the State provided to Milo, will help to continue the rebuilding and revitalization of downtown Milo," said Governor Baldacci. "This is a great community that received a devastating blow, but like all Mainers the people of Milo are resilient and I am confident that they will successfully rebound from the tragedy."

Governor Baldacci visited Milo shortly after the fire damaged the block of businesses. He commended the first responders and townspeople, and recognized that the surrounding communities also pulled together to help Milo. The Governor had directed State agencies to coordinate efforts to help the town in its process to rebuild and recover.

Impacted businesses have until Oct. 6, 2009, to apply for the EIDL loan. The interest rate on the loan is 4 percent. To apply, businesses should submit complete loan applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

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National Guard Bureau Agrees to Increased Scrutiny on Western Maine Overflights

January 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned that the National Guard Bureau will conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in its review of altering CONDOR 1 and 2 airspace in the State of Maine. Verbal confirmation was given to Colonel Donald McCormack of the Maine Air National Guard by Major Steve Lippert of the Air National Guard Readiness Center at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

"I am pleased that the National Guard Bureau has agreed to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement before moving forward with this proposal," Governor Baldacci said. "I had serious concerns about the contents of an earlier Environmental Assessment Supplement regarding this proposal, and I hope that the full EIS will help to ensure that any decisions made regarding CONDOR are in the best interest of everyone involved."

In the Spring of 2007, the Massachusetts Air National Guard issued a proposal which would have permitted training missions to be conducted at a floor of 500 feet above ground level within the CONDOR Military Operating Area. The floor is currently set at 7,000 feet above mean sea level. The Military Operating Area includes portions of Franklin and Oxford County in Western Maine. Governor Baldacci requested an EIS because of his concerns about the proposal.

Governor Baldacci sent a letter to Harry Knudsen of the Air National Guard Readiness Center Wednesday afternoon, saying that he appreciates the commitment by the National Guard Bureau and looks forward to a written confirmation of the EIS.

"While we understand the unique needs of the military to train, and support the vital mission the National Guard performs, it is imperative that a full analysis be conducted to understand the impacts, mitigate public concerns, and determine if the area proposed is appropriate and if it is the only space such training can be done," Governor Baldacci wrote in the letter. "My Administration stands ready to assist you in coordinating the process and collecting any necessary data and information."

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Governor Helps Kick-Off Girl Scout Cookie Sale

January 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today met with six Girl Scout Daisy troop members from Augusta to buy the first box of cookies for the annual Girl Scout Cookie sale. Daisies are the youngest Girl Scout members, and are in kindergarten and 1st Grade. This is the first year that Daisies will be participating in the cookies program.

"This is an event I look forward to every year," said the Governor. "This year it's even more of a treat because I am joined by the Girl Scout Daisies, the youngest Girl Scouts."

Governor Baldacci talked to the Girl Scout Daisies about the activities they most enjoy and congratulated them on taking part in the Girl Scout Cookie sale tradition.

"I know the cookie sale supports the many things you do as a Girl Scout," said the Governor. "I am very thankful that you young ladies took the time to join me today and I hope you will have a very successful cookie sale this year."

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Governor's Biennial Budget Press Conference to be Streamed Online

January 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that audio of his presentation of the FY 2010-2011 Biennial Budget will be available to listen to live online. The press conference will be held at 2 p.m. Friday in the Governor's Cabinet Room at the State House in Augusta.

To access the live audio stream, visit http://www.maine.gov/legis/audio/ at approximately 2 p.m. on Friday. The Governor's press conference will be listed under "special programming" at that time.

More details about the Governor's Biennial Budget will be released following the press conference at http://www.maine.gov/budget

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Governor Baldacci Unveils Two-Year Budget Proposal

January 9, 2009

Plan Reduces State Spending, Avoids Income and Sales Tax Increases, and Protects Core Government Functions

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his biennial budget proposal for fiscal years 2010-11. The budget accounts for a $330 million decline in revenues caused by the national recession and a structural gap of an additional $508 million.

"We are in the midst of a national crisis, the likes of which have not been seen in a generation. Our country is mired in a recession. We are all called upon to do our part to get through this difficult time," Governor Baldacci said during a budget briefing today in the Cabinet Room. "This budget I'm presenting will be difficult for all of us. But to balance our budget and prepare our State for recovery will require shared sacrifice and a commitment to work together for the greater good."

The national economy has had a direct – and negative – impact on Maine. In the two-year budget for fiscal years 2010 and 2011, Maine must account for a revenue decline of $330 million. The same economic factors that are driving revenues down are also increasing the demand for government services.

The proposed $6.1 billion budget for fiscal years 2010-11 will be about $200 million less than the 2008-09 two-year budget. According to records at the Department of Administrative and Financial Services dating back to 1974, this is the first time that a biennial budget is smaller than its predecessor. The FY 2008-09 biennial budget was $6.3 billion.

"I have taken great care to safeguard core government functions: keeping police on the streets, maintaining the State's ability to respond to emergencies, protecting vulnerable populations – our children, our elderly and our disabled – and limiting, when possible, the ripple impacts of necessary spending reductions on Maine's economy," Governor Baldacci said.

In November, Governor Baldacci took aggressive action to cut $80 million in State spending for fiscal year 2009. His 2009 Emergency Supplemental Budget continues the curtailment and accounts for a revenue decline of $140 million.

The current budget proposal for FY 2010-11 extends the majority of the budget changes included in the supplemental budget.

In September, Governor Baldacci directed every State department and agency to develop plans to reduce spending by 10 percent. Many of the ideas generated by those submissions are included in the budget, and the exercise was the basis for much of the administration's budget discussions.

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In October, Governor Baldacci ordered an immediate 10 percent reduction in his office budget. He also canceled raises for State workers not covered by collective bargaining, including members of his staff and senior administration officials.

"I recognized early last year that the national economy was deteriorating, even if we weren't sure how bad things would get, and I took immediate action to reduce State spending," Governor Baldacci said. "Every part of State government, and the programs and services it supports, has a responsibility to share in the sacrifices imposed by this recession."

The $6.1 billion two-year General Fund budget includes:

• Spending reductions across State government;

• Health insurance cost sharing for State employees. Employees who make more than $50,000 per year will be required to pay a portion of insurance costs;

• The elimination of 219 positions, which requires 139 layoffs (The number of State employees will be at its lowest level since at least 1983);

• A State-employee retirement incentive;

• A continuation of the current strict hiring freeze while ensuring appropriate positions are filled regardless of funding source;

• Temporary 10 percent reductions in tax rebate programs, such as Circuit Breaker, the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program, the Maine Tree Growth Program and State-municipal revenue sharing. The Homestead Exemption is not reduced;

• Increased fees in the departments of Marine Resources, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Conservation to partially offset potential cuts in frontline law enforcement (Total fee increases in these areas: $4.1 million);

• Changes to the tax code, including equalizing the taxes on smokeless tobacco, a change in business taxes that benefits Maine-based companies and a continuation of the estate tax;

• Reduced funding for the public financing of gubernatorial campaigns;

• Authorization for the Department of Corrections to transfer prisoners sentenced to the department to correctional institutions operated by private providers.

The budget does not increase the sales or income tax or use resources from the State's reserve accounts.

"There will be temptations to raise broad-based taxes to support important programs," Governor Baldacci said. "But raising the sales or income tax to support spending is not the right approach. We must be disciplined and mindful that this national economic crisis is already placing great strains on the people of Maine."

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"This two-year budget includes many difficult, but necessary choices. But it also recognizes that regardless of our current circumstances, we must keep an eye toward the future and invest in those areas that will create economic strength," Governor Baldacci said.

Included in the budget is a placeholder for an increase in Federal support for MaineCare, the State's Medicaid program. The Baldacci administration conservatively estimates $98.8 million in increased funding for MaineCare to be included in President-elect Obama's economic stimulus package. The estimate is based on reports from Washington on increased funding for health care.

"Given the already serious spending reductions included in this budget, it is dangerous and unnecessarily alarming to propose further cuts that we believe will be offset by Federal support," Governor Baldacci said. "If the time comes that we need to find an alternative to this approach, I am prepared to do that."

The budget invests new money in childhood immunization and preparation for a possible pan flu epidemic, maintains eligibility in MaineCare, maintains the Red Tide monitoring program, and does not reduce police officers, including State Troopers, Game Wardens and Marine Patrol Officers. It also funds Opportunity Maine, a tax incentive program that encourages recent college graduates to live and work in the State.

In addition, funding for K-12 education in fiscal years 2010-11 will be maintained at $959 million per year, roughly the level recommended in the Governor's 2009 Emergency Supplemental Budget.

Higher education funding will be reduced by about 2.4 percent, a much smaller cut than was necessary for the 2009 Emergency Supplemental Budget.

While the budget seeks $2 million in savings from the Judiciary, it also provides new funding of $1.8 million for indigent defense. Overall, the Judiciary's budget will increase by almost $6 million per year over FY 2008-2009 funding.

In addition, the budget meets the long-term goal of reallocating the funding for the State Police between the General Fund and the Highway Fund. The General Fund will account for 51 percent of State Police funding, while the Highway Fund will provide 49 percent. The change amounts to a $5.7 million General Fund transfer to the Highway Fund.

The groundwork for this budget began in November 2007 when the Governor created his Council on Competitiveness and the Economy. The Council has worked with McKinsey and Co., a management consulting firm that advises leading companies on issues of strategy, organization, technology, and operations.

McKinsey has undertaken a significant review of Maine government at all levels that has helped direct many of the initiatives included in the FY 2009 Emergency Supplemental Budget and the two-year budget that is being released today.

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The McKinsey report has identified between $100 million and $180 million in potential savings over three years. The report focuses on five key areas: K-12 education, the Department of Health and Human Services, corrections, municipal government and State purchasing.

McKinsey identified opportunities for savings in continued administrative reform of K-12 education; a reduction in the reimbursement rate for critical access hospitals, which is included in the FY 2009 Emergency Supplemental Budget; better coordination of capacity between State and county facilities and closing unnecessary facilities within the Corrections system; and greater municipal cooperation on management, purchasing, administrative functions and service delivery.

The report also identifies areas in which Maine has made significant progress in reducing administrative costs.

The Governor also announced that the budget and accompanying legislation would continue the mission of seeking efficiency.

The budget includes language to facilitate improved cooperation and joint purchasing among the University of Maine System, Community Colleges and Maine Maritime Academy, and between higher education institutions and State government. It also includes a consolidation of information technology operations within State government.

In addition, the budget sets aside $1.5 million in incentive funds for municipalities that seek to consolidate service delivery and administrative functions with regional school units.

"I understand that municipalities are being hit hard by the recession and declining State dollars," Governor Baldacci said. "But I also believe that there is great opportunity for savings for municipalities that take a more regional approach to providing administrative services. This funding will help those communities willing to consider change to use alternatives to their current way of doing business."

Separate legislation will be introduced seeking to improve the administrative structure of the State's natural resources agencies and to adopt a new structure for the Department of Economic and Community Development that emphasizes a regional approach to development and flattens layers of administration.

"I know that the increase in fees for hunters, fisherman and state park users is not ideal," Governor Baldacci said. "But I am also presenting an alternative to offset the fees with the savings achieved by reducing the number of natural resource agencies from four to one."

Governor Baldacci also commented on the uncertainty created by the recession, but his optimism that circumstances will improve.

"Maine will be tested by the current national recession and other unforeseen challenges," Governor Baldacci said. "But a consistent, disciplined approach to spending and taxation, a smaller, more modern and more efficient government structure, and smart investments in education, research and

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development, health care and economic development will usher in a new era of prosperity and strength."

"Our parents and grandparents suffered through the Depression and World War. They understood that tough times require sacrifice and ingenuity," Governor Baldacci said. "They made those tough choices and built a more prosperous world. We will do the same."

RETIREMENT INCENTIVE

This $10,000 lump sum payment retirement incentive is available to State employees who are otherwise eligible to retire effective July 1, 2009. For employees in Retirement Plan 110 (referred to as the Regular or Normal Plan), employees who were employed prior to July 1, 1983, must have at least 25 years of State service and be 60 years old. (These employees are referred to as "pre-cliff "). For employees who were hired after July 1, 1983, they must have 25 years of service and be 62 years old. Employees in Special Plans must meet the age and years of service eligibility criteria set forth for their plan.

The application period will be between July 1 and Aug. 15, 2009. The retirement date will be Aug. 31, 2009. The bonus will be paid in January 2010. The position that is vacated will be frozen from Sept. 1, 2009, until June 30, 2011. If this position is deemed essential and must be filled, the department has to freeze another position to achieve the same level of savings.

Employees who retire under this plan will receive their retirement benefit including health insurance and the $10,000 lump sum payment. The annual savings of this initiative, all funds, is $7.2 million.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Beginning July 1, 2009, State employees whose annual salaries are equal to or greater than $50,000 will be required to make a contribution toward the cost of their health insurance coverage.

Historically, the State has paid 100 percent of the premium for employees. Under the proposed plan, employees with annual salaries of $50,000 to $89,999 will be required to contribute 5 percent of the cost of their coverage; employees earning $90,000 or more will have to contribute 10 percent of the cost of their coverage.

Employees earning less than $50,000 per year will be unaffected by this change. Similarly, dependent coverage remains unchanged.

The annual cost of the individual premium in fiscal year 2010 is projected to be $8,126 and for fiscal year 2011, $8,614. Total savings, all funds, arising from this change is approximately $1.05 million per year.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Despite difficult budget challenges, the Department of Corrections will see an increase in its budget during 2010-2011. The Department will see a roughly an $18 million increase in funding over 2008-2009.

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The Department of Corrections plans to redistribute the prisoner population to reduce overall costs by contracting the housing of close and medium custody and longer sentenced prisoners to a private facility. The daily costs of boarding prisoners at an out of state facility are under $70 per day compared to the department's average rate of $103 per day.

The budget invests in the establishment of a redesigned, efficient corrections system that will meet the needs of both the State and county correctional facilities and assures ongoing property tax relief through additional funding for the newly created Board of Corrections.

The budget continues, but does not expand, use of county jails at the marginal rate of $22 per day.

39 additional positions are eliminated for a total reduction, including the supplemental budget reductions, of 64 positions.

The budget plan:

• Continues the reductions contained in the supplemental budget;

• Closes the second housing unit at the Charleston Correctional Facility;

• Reduces contracted services by $500,000;

• Closes a 90-bed housing unit at the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren;

• Closes a 40-bed minimum security facility at the Downeast Correctional Facility in Machiasport;

• Closes a 94-bed medium security housing unit at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham;

• No facility is being closed completely;

• Contracts with a private vendor for the housing of 118 prisoners. The prisoners to be housed in an out of state facility will have long sentences and minimal family ties in Maine. These prisoners will be returned to Maine with one year remaining on their sentence for transition and reentry planning and programming;

• Double cells two additional pods at the Maine State Prison, adding an additional 84 beds within existing resources.

FY10-11 HIGHWAY FUND BUDGET

• Highway Fund (HF) revenues for FY10-FY11 are $648.9 million, which are down 3% from the FY08-09 biennium.

• This budget allocates between HF Agencies as follows:

78% MaineDOT

11% Secretary of State

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10% Public Safety

1% DAFS

• As provided by Public Law 2007, Chapter, 470, 7.5% of fuel taxes, being $37.7 million, will be transferred to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank for capital transportation purposes.

• This budget reduces the portion of the State Police budget paid by the Highway Fund from 60% to 49% pursuant to Public Law 2007, Chapter 682. This represents an annual HF savings of about $5.7 Million, which has been used to provide debt service for a $50 million TransCap Revenue bond for highway reconstruction, as provided by Public Law 2007, Chapter 682.

• This budget includes the elimination of 137 full time equivalent (FTE) positions. Fifty two (52) of these are currently filled. The breakdown between Highway Fund agencies is as follows:

FTE, filled

MaineDOT - 118, 44

Secretary of State - 16, 5

Public Safety - 3, 3

Total - 137, 52

• These position eliminations reduce the Highway Fund demand by $14.7 million and reduce the Federal and Other Funds by $4.7 million, for a total savings of $19.4 million for the biennium.

• The MaineDOT position eliminations noted above represent almost 6% of all MaineDOT positions.

• MaineDOT eliminations were designed to minimize impact to frontline operations. There are no plowing or bridge maintenance layoffs.

• The eliminations primarily impact management and support functions. Though confidential (non-union eligible) positions represent only about 5% of all MaineDOT positions, 23% of the proposed layoffs are Augusta-based, salaried, confidential positions.

• Further, almost 20% of all MaineDOT Augusta-based, salaried, confidential positions were eliminated, representing 18 positions.

• When the FY 2010-11 budget is passed, MaineDOT will have eliminated almost 200 positions over the past five years, representing 9% of its workforce.

• The Capital account historically has been bolstered by Federal Funding, General Obligation bonds, TransCap Revenue bonds, and GARVEE bonds. The anticipated federal stimulus package may also significantly supplement this account on a temporary basis.

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Federal Assistance Granted for December Ice Storm

January 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned late today that President Bush has signed a disaster declaration for seven Maine counties that were severely impacted by the ice storm and snowfall that struck the State beginning Dec. 11.

"We're ready for winter weather in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "But the damage inflicted by the ice storm and winter storms is substantial. This federal support will help our State recover and repair the damage."

Governor Baldacci sought the declaration, which will provide federal support to repair damaged public infrastructure, on Jan. 2. The seven counties are: Androscoggin, Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York.

The granting of Public Assistance enables the State and qualifying local governments to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for 75 percent of the cost of repairing roads and other public property.

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Governor Nominates Two to Human Rights Commission

January 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated two people to the Maine Human Rights Commission. The Governor named Paul Vestal Jr. of Plymouth for reappointment and Kenneth Fredette of Newport for a new appointment.

"These two individuals bring a wealth of experience and knowledge that are critical to fulfilling the important mission of the Maine Human Rights Commission," said Governor Baldacci. "As the enforcement arm of Maine's anti-discrimination laws, the Commission ensures that every person in the State has a right to equal opportunity in employment, education and public accommodations."

Paul Vestal Jr. is currently the Chair of the Maine Human Rights Commission. He has served on the Commission for 18 years. He serves as the Director of Children's Services at Catholic Charities Maine. Vestal has been employed by Catholic Charities since 1997. He has served the State as a member of a number of organizations including the Maine Criminal Justice Commission, the Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, the Maine Highway Safety Commission and the Maine Developmental Disability Council.

Vestal received a B.A. from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, N.C. and a Masters in Education from Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Kenneth Fredette has maintained his own firm, the Law Office of Kenneth W. Fredette, in Newport, since 1994. His practice includes criminal, family, probate, real estate, corporate and civil law. Fredette concurrently serves as a Major in the Maine Air National Guard, where he is a Judge Advocate General. In that capacity, Fredette counsels the leadership of the Guard. He also sits on the Town of Newport Planning Board of Appeals.

Fredette received a B.S. from University of Maine at Machias and a Masters from the Ed Muskie School for Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. He earned a J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law and is currently working toward a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

The Maine Human Rights Commission has five members who are appointed by the Governor. Nominees are subject to review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary and approved by the full Senate. Members serve staggered five-year terms. No more than three of the members may be of the same political party.

The Maine Human Rights Commission, established in 1971, investigates complaints of unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, education, access to public accommodations, extension of credit, and offensive names. The Commission attempts to resolve complaints of discrimination to the mutual satisfaction of those who are involved. The Maine Human Rights Act authorizes the Commission to pursue remedies for unlawful discrimination in Court when necessary to enforce the Act.

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Governor's Statement on Bill Introduced to Allow Gay Marriages

January 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement after the introduction of "An Act to End Discrimination in Civil Marriages and Affirm Religious Freedom."

"In the past, I have opposed gay marriage while supporting the idea of civil unions," Governor Baldacci said. "I have been a tireless defender of equal opportunity and have fought to end discrimination in employment, housing and throughout society. Unfortunately, there is no question that gay and lesbian people and their families still face discrimination."

"This debate is extremely personal for many people, and it's an issue that I struggle with trying to find the best path forward."

"Right now, I'm focused on creating jobs and doing what I can to help our economy recovery from an unprecedented recession. We cannot allow ourselves to be divided or turned against one another during this crisis."

"As the debate about marriage progresses, it's my hope that we can have a thoughtful conversation that considers all sides of the issue."

"I spoke with Sen. Damon yesterday about his legislation, and I told him I would listen to what he has to say, and I will listen as the people of Maine join in this conversation."

"I'm not prepared to say I support gay marriage today, but I will consider what I hear as the Legislature works to find the best way to address discrimination."

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Governor Announces Wind Energy Rebate

January 13, 2009

New Small Wind Working Group is Established

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced a pilot program today that will provide incentives for small wind energy projects. Enhanced incentives will be available for projects that meet the highest standards. The program will make potential incentives worth as much as $6,000.

The announcement came at a kickoff event establishing the new Maine Small Wind Working Group. With help from a grant from the federal Department of Energy, the working group will bring together stakeholders from around the State to act as an information clearinghouse for Mainers interested in establishing small wind projects.

"Electricity and energy costs can make for a daunting future unless we work together to build consensus in Maine to embrace clean and renewable technologies like wind power," Governor Baldacci said. "These programs will help bring wind further into Maine's energy mix."

Efficiency Maine, a program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC), will oversee the working group and the incentives for installation of small wind energy systems.

The rebates were created under a law - sponsored by the Governor and passed unanimously by the State Legislature - to encourage development of wind power projects. The rebate enhancements came through separate actions taken by the Legislature and the PUC.

Rebates provide up to $2,000 for qualified residential wind systems and $4,000 for non-residential systems that meet program requirements, under rules adopted by the Maine Public Utilities Commission in accordance with recent statutory changes.

Under the pilot program, projects which meet rigorous standards for siting and tower height will be eligible for an additional $2,000.

"Wind is an abundant and free resource here, and Mainers increasingly recognize it as a viable component of the State's energy future," said Sharon M. Reishus, who chairs the Commission.

The Maine Small Wind Working Group will hold quarterly meetings and periodic conferences, provide expert speakers, technical and financial advice, and create other resources like wind potential maps, case studies and a Web site.

Qualified applications for the new wind incentive program received through the first quarter will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. If demand appears to be on track to exceed available funding after the first quarter, a random selection system may be instituted.

For more information and to download applications, call Efficiency Maine at 1-866-376-2463 and ask for Richard Fortier.

For this and other Maine PUC information, visit:

http://www.maine.gov/mpuc/

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Maine to Begin Expanded Federal Weatherization Program

January 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced that according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Maine will be the first state to begin using $6.4 million in federal 2009-2010 DOE funds to weatherize homes in January. The early start to getting the additional funding out will complement the State's comprehensive efforts to help Mainers deal with heating costs and conserve energy during difficult economic times. Maine's increased funding level for weatherization is more than double the amount received during the previous funding cycle.

"This is great news for Maine and for the low-income families that will be helped," said Governor Baldacci. "The sooner we can get the money out and the homes weatherized, the sooner these families can reduce their energy costs."

In the summer of 2008, Governor Baldacci directed members of his Administration to work with the nonprofit and private sectors to begin planning a comprehensive action plan to prepare Mainers for this winter. The Governor credited this early, comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing energy costs to the success in receiving approval from the Federal government to begin using weatherization funds right away.

The Weatherization Program finances basic improvements to the homes of low-income households to make them more energy efficient. The typical weatherization project will reduce the home's energy needs by 20 percent to 30 percent, said Dale McCormick, Director of MaineHousing, the agency running the DOE program.

"We are geared up for the program and ready to go, so the DOE gave us the green light to start weatherizing homes immediately," McCormick said. "We expect to weatherize 1,550 homes between now and September 2010, using the $6.4 million in DOE funding the federal agency has made available."

Baldacci said that, in addition to making more Maine homes energy efficient, the program will provide new employment opportunities for Maine workers. According to the DOE, the Weatherization Program creates 52 direct jobs and 23 indirect jobs for each $1 million invested in weatherization work.

Already, since 2008, Maine State Housing Authority has trained 320 new energy auditors and 95 weatherization technicians.
McCormick noted that MaineHousing expects to invest more than $15 million in three different programs to weatherize nearly 4,000 homes.

In addition to DOE weatherization, MaineHousing has allocated $7 million of the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds for weatherization. That funding will make about 1,900 homes more energy efficient. LIHEAP is funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

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MaineHousing also expects to weatherize more than 300 homes through the Governor's $1.5 million Weatherization Program currently underway. MaineHousing recently was awarded $500,000 from the Energy and Carbon Savings Trust that will add to this weatherization initiative, bringing the total funding to $2 million and the total number of homes weatherized to 400.

MaineHousing runs the Governor's Weatherization Program directly, while it operates the DOE and LIHEAP weatherization efforts through regional Community Action Program (CAP) agencies.

The Governor praised the State's many partners, including Maine's Congressional Delegation, in recent efforts that successfully led to substantial increases in federal LIHEAP and Weatherization Program funding. He said that continued national economic recession and global financial crisis means these funds are critical to many hard working Maine families and businesses.

"One of the best ways we have to cut energy costs, reduce our dependency on foreign heating oil, and make a smaller 'carbon footprint' is to make our homes more energy efficient," said Governor Baldacci. "And our weatherization efforts are creating jobs, pumping money into Maine's economy, with most of the money going to small businesses engaged in home weatherization."

For more information on the Weatherization Program and other Maine State Housing Authority programs, please visit www.mainehousing.org

For a comprehensive list of energy information and assistance, please visit http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml

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Governor Baldacci Congratulates Cooke Aquaculture

January 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated Cooke Aquaculture today for opening a processing plant in Machiasport and bringing 80 full-time jobs to the area. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the plant this morning to celebrate the facility.

"The opening of this plant in Downeast Maine is a great example of how determined investors, a high-quality workforce and a supportive business climate can prove that Maine is competitive on the world market," Governor Baldacci said in a letter read at the event. "I want to thank the Cooke family – to Mike and Glenn and all those who work at this high-quality company."

Cooke Aquaculture made a commitment in 2004 to reopen the Machiasport processing plant. The plant was closed due to a lack of fish in the water at the time. The company set a benchmark of 3 million fish in pens to make the facility profitable. Although the benchmark has not yet been reached, the company re-opened the facility in November with new equipment and a new workforce.

Cooke Aquaculture is based in Blacks Harbour, New Brunswick and was named one of the top 50 best managed companies in Canada in 2006. Governor Baldacci says that the company should be applauded for being committed to not only the resource, but to Machiasport and the State of Maine.

"The Cooke family and their dedicated employees deserve a great deal of credit for their innovative farming methods and hard work," the Governor said in the letter. "I would like to congratulate them on their success and note that the State looks forward to working closely with them in their continued efforts to compete in the world market."

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Governor Saddened to Hear of Passing of Andrew Wyeth

January 16, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of renowned artist Andrew Wyeth. Wyeth, of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and Cushing, Maine, became widely popular for "Christina's World," which was painted in Maine.

"My heart goes out to the Wyeth family, and I join with the millions of fans of Andrew Wyeth to mourn the loss of such a talented artist," said Governor Baldacci. "I've known Andrew Wyeth's son, Jamie, for a number of years, and have the highest regard for the accomplishments of the entire Wyeth family, three-generations of which have contributed to the art world. Andrew Wyeth and his family have been tremendous benefactors to the State of Maine. The people of this State appreciate their warmth and friendship."

Wyeth reportedly died in his sleep at the age of 91.

Andrew Wyeth received great acclaim for his lifetime of work. He was the first painter to receive the Medal of Freedom, which was bestowed upon him by President John F. Kennedy. Wyeth was also the first painter to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. Additionally, and most-recently, he was presented with the National Medal of the Arts by President George W. Bush.

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Governor Declares Emergency to Enable Heating Fuel Deliveries

January 16, 2009

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a procedural proclamation to facilitate deliveries of heating fuel across the State.

The State of Emergency proclamation will enable the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to allow heating oil delivery personnel to stay on the road longer to make sure homes and businesses stay warm. Demand for heating fuel deliveries is up, and the current inventory of propane is down because of a disruption in supply. Short-term rationing of propane is possible.

"These harsh winter temperatures that have gripped the State present dangerous conditions threatening people and property," said Governor Baldacci. "This is a necessary step to ensure that during the prolonged deep freeze, people and businesses get timely heating fuel deliveries."

The emergency declaration is in effect for seven days, after which the Governor will re-evaluate the heating fuel situation.

The text of the declaration follows:

State of Maine

Governor's Emergency Proclamation for US-DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Hours of Service Waiver

WHEREAS, the northeastern United States, including Maine, is experiencing artic cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills; and

WHEREAS, this cold weather is expected to continue for approximately 7 days affecting the entire State; and

WHEREAS, heating fuel in Maine is in great demand because of the cold, and because supplies have lagged behind demand; and

WHEREAS, federal motor carrier safety regulations determine the number of hours the drivers of heating fuel and bulk petroleum delivery and transport vehicles may operate; and

WHEREAS, many drivers in the State will shortly be approaching their federal limit on hours of operation and may have to cease delivery of heating fuel and bulk petroleum fuels; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if heating fuels cannot be transported or delivered; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, pursuant to 49 CFR part

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390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR part 395, and therefore allow heating fuel and bulk petroleum delivery and transport drivers to operate additional hours; and

WHEREAS, motor carriers that have an Out-Of-Service Order in effect may not take advantage of the relief from regulation that such a declaration provides under 49 CFR 390.23,

NOW THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B M.R.S.A. section 742, and for the purpose pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of January 16, 2009 through January 23, 2009.

(Signed)

John E. Baldacci

Governor

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Governor's Statement on the Inauguration of President Obama

January 20, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today concerning the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. Governor Baldacci attended the inauguration in Washington.

"Today represents an important turning point in our nation's history," Governor Baldacci said. "President Obama has demonstrated to the world the strength of our democracy and the ideals we cherish as a people. He spoke of America once again being ready to lead the world toward a more peaceful and prosperous future. It's a goal we all share."

"There's much work to be done and the new President will face significant challenges, but I know he's anxious to get started and I am confident he will be successful. I will do what I can to help him as he confronts a national economic crisis and a world torn by violence."

"President Obama's inauguration shows that America and its unique form of government are able to grow and improve. And with this peaceful exchange of power, the United States once again offers an example to the world that democracy has the ability to renew itself and bring about dramatic change."

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Governor Baldacci Signs Order on Future of Sears Island

January 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an Executive Order to formalize the implementation plan developed by the Sears Island Planning Initiative's Joint Use Planning Committee. The agreement, which was approved by the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation last week, delineates a significant parcel of Sears Island for conservation and another parcel for potential port development.

An easement was also signed today by the Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust for the portion of Sears Island set aside for education, recreation and conservation purposes.

"Many people have worked extremely hard and for many years to reach this consensus," said Governor Baldacci. "Today we have taken crucial steps to ensure successful and compatibly managed marine transportation, recreation, education and conservation uses for Sears Island, the future of which has been a matter of contentious debate for 40 years. I want to particularly thank town officials and the residents of Searsport, Senator Dennis Damon and the other members of the Transportation Committee, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the many other partners who came to the table to reach this agreement, which I believe to be in the best interests of the people of Maine."

James Gilway, Town Manager of Searsport, heralded this day by recalling that for decades so many people in Searsport have said that "never in their lifetime would they see a breakthrough for Sears Island."

"Today that has changed to, 'we will see something in our time' and we are thrilled," Gilway added.

Gilway extended the appreciation of the Town of Searsport Selectmen to Governor Baldacci for supporting the hard-won consensus agreement and bringing it to fruition. The Town is also gratified by the Transportation Committee's openness to the additional information regarding regional support for the Joint Use Planning Report

The signed Order directs MaineDOT to immediately initiate the process of marketing and development of a cargo/container port on a 330-acre portion of Sears Island and Mack Point.

MaineDOT will work with the Maine Port Authority and other interested parties to take advantage of the growing importance of inter-modal transportation and shipping of products by sea. The Executive Order directs MaineDOT to take into account during this process environmentally responsible technologies to minimize the impact to natural resources.

The Transportation Committee vote and the Executive Order authorize a Buffer Conservation Easement that will provide significant public benefits and economic opportunity through education, nature observation and low-impact outdoor recreation on 601 acres on Sears Island.

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The State of Maine, through MaineDOT, will remain the owner of Sears Island and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust will act as the holder of the easement. Maine's Department of Environmental Protection will serve as third-party enforcer of the easement. Additionally, a Sears Island Conservation Area Advisory Group will be created to assist MaineDOT in the decision-making process concerning appropriate management of the Buffer Conservation Area.

"Maine Coast Heritage Trust is honored to have been entrusted with the responsibility of holding this permanent conservation easement," said Paul Gallay, president of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. "We admire the community planning efforts, are glad to play a role in the Island's future, and we are truly enthusiastic about the opportunities it will create for the local community."

The text of the Executive Order follows:

24 FY 08/09 January 22, 2009

AN ORDER IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SEARS ISLAND PLANNING INITIATIVE'S JOINT USE PLANNING COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is dedicated to preserving its historic coastline while providing economic opportunities to its citizens that its proximity to navigable waters offer; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine owns Sears Island in the Town of Searsport, County of Waldo, where both of these goals can be compatibly and responsibly pursued; and

WHEREAS, Sears Island lies centrally on Maine's largest bay, Penobscot Bay, which has seaports, manufacturing centers, farms, rocky headlands and well over 100 islands on its waters and shores. The Bay, which serves as the economic domain of a thousand or more working fishing and lobster boats, includes a major shipping channel, and is a recreational and ecological location of world class standing; and

WHEREAS, Sears Island located in the harbor of Searsport is uniquely suited, through its deep water ship access and its rail connection allowing double stacked rail cars to travel unabated from Searsport to Chicago, to be the location of a future freight container port; and

WHEREAS, Maine's future economy will be strengthened by the inclusion of Sears Island in the global freight transportation routes; and

WHEREAS, the parties to the Consensus Agreement, that created the Joint Use Planning Committee, shared a good faith belief that opportunities to pursue a port and conservation uses were compatible and should be given equal weight and attention and should all be vigorously pursued ; and

WHEREAS, the Sears Island Planning Initiative Consensus Agreement established that the appropriate uses for Sears Island are compatibly managed marine transportation, recreation, education, and conservation, therefore, the joint use planning process defined two significant land use parcels on the Island, a 601-acre conservation parcel known as the "Protected Property" and a 330-acre

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"Transportation Parcel", for the benefit of the Town of Searsport, County of Waldo and the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, Sears Island Planning Initiative Consensus Agreement established that the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) will actively market, solicit proposals and create partnerships for a cargo/container port on Mack Point and/or Sears Island on the Transportation Parcel; and

WHEREAS, Sears Island Planning Initiative Consensus Agreement established that the MaineDOT, with the Town of Searsport and appropriate others will provide for light recreation, education and conservation facilities on the Protected Property by conveyance of an easement covering that area; and

WHEREAS, the Final Report and Recommendations for Implementation of the Sears Island Planning Initiative Joint Use Planning Committee, prepared pursuant to the Sears Island Planning Initiative Steering Committee Consensus Agreement has been presented to and approved by the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation of the Maine Legislature in accordance with Maine Public Law 2005, Chapter 277;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order and direct as follows:

The Maine Department of Transportation will in all respects implement the recommendations of the Sears Island Planning Initiative's Joint Use Planning Committee.

• MaineDOT, as Grantor, will grant a Conservation Easement on a 601-acre conservation parcel known as the Protected Property on Sears Island to the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Holder, with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection as the Third Party Enforcer.

• MaineDOT will fix the boundaries of the Transportation Parcel and the Protected Property as determined by the Joint Use Planning Committee and defined in the Conservation Easement.

• The Transportation Parcel is reserved by MaineDOT for future transportation use, allowing for joint or concurrent development of a marine transportation facility, compliant with 23 CFR 774.

• MaineDOT will create a "Sears Island Conservation Area Advisory Group" to provide public input on future land use and guidance to MaineDOT with respect to the management of the Protected Property.

• MaineDOT, upon execution of the Conservation Easement, will actively and aggressively work with the Maine Port Authority and other interested parties to initiate the process of marketing and development of a cargo/container port on Mack Point and Sears Island in accordance with the Agreement including initiating a request for proposals for a cargo/container port facility which will utilize environmentally-responsible technologies to minimize impact to natural resources, cultural values and existing marine activities while creating significant economic opportunity for the citizens of the State of Maine.

Effective Date:

The effective date of this Executive Order is January 22, 2009.

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Governor: 'No One More Capable' than George Mitchell

January 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the appointment of former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell of Maine as a special envoy to the Middle East.

"There's no one more capable for this appointment than George Mitchell," Governor Baldacci said. "His willingness to dedicate himself to this daunting mission speaks to his role as one of our country's most important – and effective – diplomats. During his time in the U.S. Senate, as a peacemaker in Northern Ireland and in efforts here at home to educate a new generation of Maine leaders, George has demonstrated his statesmanship and devotion to public service. We are all proud of him."

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Governor Applauds Work of Appropriations Committee

January 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the unanimous vote of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs on LD 45, which is the Emergency Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2009.

"The Appropriations Committee has managed a difficult process under incredible time constraints, and the members have done it in a way that included the public and reached a bipartisan, unanimous decision," Governor Baldacci said. "While there were many tough decisions, the Committee found a good path forward that should earn the support of the entire Legislature."

"I am particularly impressed with the Committee's new chairs. Sen. Bill Diamond and Rep. Emily Cain led an inclusive process that kept all sides talking during the most contentious points in the negotiations. I also want to recognize the efforts of Sen. Richard Rosen and Rep. Sawin Millett, the Republican leads on the Committee, who worked diligently to achieve consensus."

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Governor Celebrates Startup of Largest Commercial Wind Project in New England

January 22, 2009

DANFORTH – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the startup of commercial wind operations at the Stetson Wind Project, the largest commercial wind project in Maine and New England. First Wind is operating the wind farm, in addition to its Mars Hill facility.

"Wind power generated here at Stetson Wind displaces traditional energy production that contributes to global warming and pollution," Governor Baldacci said. "It also reduces our dependence on foreign, unstable energy sources."

According to First Wind, the Stetson Wind project will use 38 General Electric wind turbines and will have the capacity to generate about 167 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity every year. Stetson Wind will have the capacity to generate enough energy to power to about 23,500 homes in New England each year.

The project officially began generating power and delivering it to the New England electrical grid today.

"The Stetson Wind project continues Maine's aggressive leadership in pursuing energy independence and developing clean, renewable sources of energy," the Governor said. "By harnessing these sources of energy locally, we keep money in our State and we create jobs in our State, all while improving our environment and our national security."

Construction on the project began about a year ago, creating about 350 jobs in development and construction. All told, First Wind spent approximately $50 million with Maine businesses to complete the construction. With the Stetson Wind project operational, six full-time jobs have been created at the facility.

The Governor said that finding alternative sources of energy has been a goal of his administration as well as the new administration in Washington.

"I've talked personally with President Obama about the need to continue to press forward with energy independence, and am extremely encouraged by his commitment to ending our dangerous and expensive dependence on fossil fuels," Governor Baldacci said. "The commitment of First Wind to the two projects it operates in Maine is a great example of the incredible convergence of our economic and environmental well-being."

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Governor's Statement on Bill Introduced to Allow Gay Marriages

January 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement after the introduction of "An Act to End Discrimination in Civil Marriages and Affirm Religious Freedom."

"In the past, I have opposed gay marriage while supporting the idea of civil unions," Governor Baldacci said. "I have been a tireless defender of equal opportunity and have fought to end discrimination in employment, housing and throughout society. Unfortunately, there is no question that gay and lesbian people and their families still face discrimination."

"This debate is extremely personal for many people, and it's an issue that I struggle with trying to find the best path forward."

"Right now, I'm focused on creating jobs and doing what I can to help our economy recovery from an unprecedented recession. We cannot allow ourselves to be divided or turned against one another during this crisis."

"As the debate about marriage progresses, it's my hope that we can have a thoughtful conversation that considers all sides of the issue."

"I spoke with Sen. Damon yesterday about his legislation, and I told him I would listen to what he has to say, and I will listen as the people of Maine join in this conversation."

"I'm not prepared to say I support gay marriage today, but I will consider what I hear as the Legislature works to find the best way to address discrimination."

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Governor's Statement on President Obama's Auto Emissions Announcement

January 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci said that he was encouraged by President Barack Obama's policy announcement today regarding energy and the environment. Specifically, the President directed federal regulators and the U.S. Department of Transportation to pursue policies that will lead to a cleaner environment and higher automobile fuel efficiency standards.

In 2007, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) denied a waiver to the State of California to implement more stringent motor vehicle standards than federal limits. Maine, along with more than 12 other states, had sought the right to adopt the California standards. President Obama's direction to the EPA would ensure a review of the request by California, Maine and the other states to adopt stricter vehicle emissions.

"Maine has led the way in pursuing energy independence and a clean environment," said Governor Baldacci. "We now have a partner in Washington, D.C., who understands the need to promote clean, renewable energy. I am pleased that President Obama today outlined a clear vision for our national energy future and will support flexibility for states in regards to environmental policy."

The Governor also praised the President's focus on building renewable energy sources through his proposed federal stimulus package.

"I had the pleasure of talking personally to President Obama shortly after his election and we discussed the absolute necessity of pursuing clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources," said the Governor. "Reducing our dependency on fossil fuels will benefit our economy now and in the future. I hope that the stimulus package and future energy and infrastructure policy will complement where Maine has been going and will continue to lead."

Among other notable achievements in recent years, Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources. Maine is part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, an innovative regional approach to reducing carbon emissions.

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Legislature Passes Supplemental Budget for FY 2009

January 27, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the final passage of LD 45, which is the Emergency Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2009.

"Maine is facing an unprecedented, national economic crisis, and the Legislature has recognized the urgency of taking action now," Governor Baldacci said. "Legislative leaders in both parties have worked cooperatively to pass a supplemental budget that addresses a significant revenue downturn in the current fiscal year. They deserve credit for their hard work during a difficult time."

Governor Baldacci also recognized Republican and Democratic leaders who negotiated in good faith, while balancing the need for quick action with the need for public input and debate.

"Much has been accomplished during the early days of this Legislative session, but we have much more work to do," Governor Baldacci said. "As we move forward with the biennial budget, it's important that we all remember how much can be accomplished when we all work together."

The supplemental budget was approved unanimously by the Appropriations Committee on Jan. 23. It was enacted by the full House and Senate tonight.

A signing ceremony will be scheduled for Thursday, with time and date to be determined.

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Governor Marks Next Step for Florence House

January 27, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight joined supporters of Florence House to mark the next step toward the project starting construction. Florence House will provide permanent, supported housing to chronically homeless women in Portland. The project is a partnership between Avesta Housing and Preble Street.

"Preble Street has long been recognized for providing a critical safety net to those in need in the community," Governor Baldacci said. "And Preble Street has been an important partner with the State in addressing not only the immediate shelter needs of these individuals, but in also addressing the underlying causes and symptoms of homelessness. Florence House holds the promise to make great strides to continue our shared goal of ending chronic homelessness in the Portland area."

Florence House will feature three types of housing to accommodate 50 women, including 25 apartments, 15 safe haven living spaces for women who are not yet ready to live independently, and 10 emergency beds for temporarily homeless women. The Florence House model is based on approaches to homelessness and chronic mental illness that have emerged nationally, as well as experience at the Preble Street Day Shelter and in developing Logan Place.

"This is another important collaboration, building on your successful partnership with Logan Place," the Governor said. "We need to continue to coordinate the response to homelessness across government, nonprofit and private sectors."

Governor Baldacci has supported Florence House since the project was announced in January of 2007. The Governor was joined at the ceremony by Mark Swann, Executive Director of Preble Street; Dana Totman, Executive Director of Avesta Housing; Elaine House, Chair of the Preble Street Board of Directors; and about three dozen supporters of the project.

Most State Offices to Close at 2:30 p.m. Today

January 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced that all State Government Offices, except those in Aroostook County, will close today, Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. due to the inclement weather.

Aroostook County State Offices to Open at 10 a.m. Thursday

January 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced that State Government Offices in Aroostook County only will open at 10 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 29 due to the inclement weather. Other State Government Offices will open as normal.

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Governor Signs Supplemental Budget

January 29, 2009

Praises Legislature on Quick, Bipartisan, Decisive Action

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed the Fiscal Year 2009 Supplemental Budget, LD 45, surrounded by a bipartisan group of legislators. The Supplemental Budget brings the budget into balance through June 30, 2009. It offsets the $166 million gap between projected revenues and expenditures through targeted cuts and use of State reserves.

The Governor praised Legislators, especially leadership and the members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, for their thorough and expeditious handling of the Supplemental Budget.

"Maine people should be proud of the way their legislators came together to balance the State's budget during this critical time," said Governor Baldacci. "The true test of leadership comes during hard times. The national recession demands that we reduce State spending, avoid income and sales tax increases, and protect core government functions. Passage of the Supplemental Budget is one more step in our sustained response."

The Governor said that attention now turns to continued work on the Biennial Budget, which brings spending into line with revenues for the Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011.

"I know the decisions that you made in considering the Supplemental Budget were not easy, and we have further challenges awaiting us with the Biennial Budget," said the Governor. "Hardworking Maine families and businesses are looking to us to do our part to lay the foundation for future economic growth and not add to their present burdens. We still have much work to do, and it will require all of us working together to get it done."

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Governor Tells Real Estate Conference that Maine's Opportunities Remain Strong in Difficult National Economy

January 29, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today said that while the national economy is in crisis, Maine continues to hold great opportunities for its citizens. The Governor made the comments during his welcome address for the Maine Real Estate & Development Association's Annual Real Estate Forecast Conference.

"This is a tough national economic crisis that has gone global, and it will require all of us working together to get through it. But we will get through it," Governor Baldacci said. "Every single piece of Maine is a valuable piece of real estate, and it is getting easier and easier to realize that."

Governor Baldacci said Maine is well positioned to benefit from the developing federal economic stimulus package, using it for investments in the State's infrastructure, and putting Maine people to work.

The Governor also said that Maine will continue to be a leader in energy production, using the State's abundant natural resources to harness wind, solar, wood and tidal energy.

"We have a tremendous opportunity to see thousands of people working on transmission lines and wind projects in our State," the Governor said. "The more we do to reduce the use of petroleum for transportation and heating, the more we can diminish our carbon footprint and the more we can invest our energy dollars in our State, not overseas."

Governor Baldacci told the more than 500 people gathered for the conference that while the economy continues to struggle, working together can help everyone get through it. He cited Maine's Supplemental Budget, which was passed Tuesday with broad bipartisan support in the Legislature, and signed Thursday afternoon by the Governor, as one example of how working together can benefit the entire State.

"The short term will be hard," Governor Baldacci said. "But for the long term, if we all work together, we will pull through and be well prepared for the future."

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Governor Celebrates New Poland Spring Bottling Plant

February 2, 2009

KINGFIELD - Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Poland Spring Water Company's newest water bottling facility in Maine. The Governor helped to cut the ribbon on the state-of-the-art, LEED certified facility, and toured the plant with officials from the company.

"In this difficult global economic recession, it is particularly heartwarming to celebrate the opening of a new manufacturing facility," Governor Baldacci said. "Your investment today shows us again how you value Maine workers."

Poland Spring officials say the project represents an investment of $60 million. They expect to hire 40-60 employees for the startup of the plant and could increase staff based on production needs. The new plant uses Bradbury Spring in Kingfield as the primary source of water for the facility, which will blow-mold its bottles on site, eliminating the need to truck in empty bottles.

Governor Baldacci thanked the company for supporting Maine employees and Maine's environment.

"Poland Spring has worked hard to manage water resources sustainably and transparently to generate jobs in our State," the Governor said. "The company is a good corporate partner and a good fit for Maine."

Poland Spring currently employs more than 800 people in Maine, providing about $40 million in payroll to the Maine economy. In addition to the new facility in Kingfield, Poland Spring operates two other bottling plants in Poland Spring and Hollis. The Kingfield bottling plant began operating in late 2008.

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Governor Baldacci Receives Report from Southern Maine Regional Water Council

February 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received a study from the Southern Maine Regional Water Council, which outlines benefits of regional delivery of public water. The study determined that Saco River and Sebago Lake are the only fresh water sources in the region with the ability to serve the area's population and economic needs for the long term and additional measures should be taken to protect the resources.

"This study is another crucial step in examining regional water supplies and to create a framework for a combined distribution and supply system for southern Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "A safe and reliable water supply is essential for continued economic growth in the region."

The Southern Maine Regional Water Council strongly supports a regional approach and working with the Governor's Office. Governor Baldacci applauded the group for commissioning the study and said that work will continue on the findings of the study.

"By developing a regional approach to the protection and delivery of critical public water supplies, the Council has made important strides to improve the quality of water service and reduce costs over the long haul," the Governor said. "The State – through my office, the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine CDC and the Department of Environmental Protection – will continue to work with the Water Council and others to ensure the protection of water sources."

The Southern Maine Regional Water Council is made up of water districts from Portland, Biddeford-Saco, Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Wells, Kittery, Sanford, South Berwick and York. The Council was formed in 2005 to encourage regional solutions for public water delivery.

The study was funded by a grant from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank.

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Governor Announces Nominations to Court

February 4, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today renominated six members of the Maine courts.

Chief Justice Leigh Saufley and Justice Jon Levy are being renominated to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Justice E. Allen Hunter and Justice Joseph Jabar are renominated for the Superior Court. Governor Baldacci is also renominating Judge John Beliveau and Judge John David Kennedy to the District Court.

"These distinguished members of the Maine courts have impeccable records serving the people and the laws of this State," said Governor Baldacci. "I am pleased to put their names forward so they can continue to provide the highest level of integrity, talent and temperament to the bench."

Chief Justice Leigh Saufley, a resident of Portland, has served as Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court since 2001, having served as an Associate Justice since 1997. She sat on the Superior Court from 1993 to 1997, and on the District Court from 1990 to 1993. Prior to her experience in the Judiciary Branch, Chief Justice Saufley worked at the Maine Department of the Attorney General, the U.S. Veterans Administration and in private practice at Silsby & Silsby. The Chief Justice earned a B.S. at the University of Maine and a J.D. at the University of Maine School of Law.

Justice Jon Levy has served on the Maine Supreme Judicial Court since 2002. He sat on the District Court from 1995 to 2002. He was previously in private practice in York. Justice Levy received his undergraduate degree from Syracuse University, and his J.D. from West Virginia University College of Law. He is a resident of Portland.

Justice E. Allen Hunter has served on the Superior Court since 2001. A resident of Caribou, Justice Hunter was an attorney with Sloman and Hunter, P.A. for 25 years prior to his service on the bench, and had served as a board member of many community institutions, including the Caribou School Board and the Board of Directors of Cary Medical Center. Justice Hunter received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maine and his J.D. from Gonzaga University School of Law.

Justice Joseph Jabar, of Waterville, has served on the Superior Court since 2001. Prior to his service on the bench, Justice Jabar served in private practice for 22 years at Jabar, Batten, Ringer & Murphy Law Firm. He served in the Maine State Legislature from 1996 to 1999. He is a graduate of Colby College and the University of Maine School of Law.

Judge John Beliveau was first appointed to the District Court in 1984. A resident of Lewiston, Judge Beliveau previously served as an attorney and partner at Marshall, Raymond, Beliveau, Dionne & Bonneau. He was with the firm for 20 years. He was Mayor of Lewiston from 1969 to 1970. Judge Beliveau earned a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame, an MBA from New York University Graduate School of Business, and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law School.

Judge John David Kennedy, who resides in North Yarmouth, has served on the District Court since 2002. Previous to his experience on the District Court, Judge Kennedy served four years as a Case

Management Officer/Magistrate. He also served five years as a regional court administrator and five years as Director of the Maine State Legislature's Office of Revisor of Statutes. Judge Kennedy is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and received his J.D. from Boston University Law School.

Judicial nominees must be reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the full Senate.

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Governor Highlights the Strengths of Maine During Portland Chamber's Eggs & Issues

February 4, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning delivered the keynote address at the Portland Community Chamber's Eggs & Issues. The Governor covered a wide range of topics, including Maine's natural resources, alternative energy opportunities, the State's Supplemental and Biennial Budgets, and higher education.

The Governor told the crowd of more than 400 people that Maine can pull through the global financial crisis by concentrating on the State's strengths – its natural resources and its people.

"We have some of the best natural resources anywhere in the world," Governor Baldacci said. "There is tremendous opportunity in harnessing those natural resources – wind, solar, wood and tidal – to put thousands of people to work while helping to kick our addiction to foreign oil."

The Governor said that while gas and oil prices are down at the moment, they are not likely to stay that way. He said that Maine's most successful times were when cheap energy was an abundant resource in the State.

"When Maine was robust with manufacturing and production jobs, it was when we had access to locally produced, inexpensive energy," Governor Baldacci said. "We don't have that access anymore. But we have an opportunity in this time period to reclaim that heritage, to be able to take advantage of renewable resources, and do it in a smart, sustainable way."

Governor Baldacci said that change should be embraced and that working together is necessary to prepare Maine for the future.

"We cannot keep obsolete administrative structures in place that were designed decades ago and are not efficient," the Governor said. "We know the talent underlying each Maine person and what they have to do to make ends meet and what businesses need to do to survive and to grow. To enable them to thrive we must change our administrative structures for the future."

The Governor said he welcomes President Obama's call for bipartisanship in Washington and said that he is pleased to see lawmakers in Maine working together for the best interests of the people.

"The Legislature overwhelmingly passed the supplemental budget in record time," Governor Baldacci said. "We need to protect our most vulnerable while securing Maine's future. It is a difficult balance."

The Governor said that he hopes the prudent work will continue as the Legislature works on the biennial budget.

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"We have an $838 million budget gap in a $6.1 billion budget," Governor Baldacci said. "Everyone is being asked to share the burden. We are presenting a plan to reclaim our heritage and restructure the way things are done."

Students from four Portland area high schools were in the audience for the Governor's speech. Addressing the students specifically, the Governor closed by urging them to take advantage of what Maine offers them that is not available elsewhere.

"There are things you can do in Maine that you can't do anywhere else," the Governor said. "If you're willing to work hard and get the education and training you need, you can do whatever you want to do. You can do it here and rise faster in Maine than you can in any other state."

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Portland Community Chamber's Eggs & Issues series. This is the 7th consecutive year that Governor Baldacci has spoken at the breakfast.

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Governor Unveils Web Site for Tracking Federal Stimulus

February 4, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today unveiled a new State Web page dedicated to the developing federal economic stimulus package, now called The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Web page provides information and resources so that Maine people can track the legislation's progress in Congress and actions taken by State government related to the stimulus. Following passage and the President's signature of the final bill, the Web page will also serve as a clearinghouse so that the public can access up-to-date information about where and how federal stimulus funds are dispersed.

"I appreciate the overwhelming interest in the developing federal stimulus package and am pleased to offer this Web site as another of many steps my Administration has initiated to make Maine State government as transparent and open as possible," said the Governor. "The Web page being unveiled today will serve as a valuable tool for the public."

In addition, a section will be added to allow public comment on the stimulus package.

The Governor reiterated his hope that progress will continue to be made in finalizing the federal economic stimulus package. Governor Baldacci has personally addressed issues important to Maine with President Obama, members of his Administration and Maine's Congressional Delegation, among others.

"I believe Maine is well positioned to benefit from the developing federal Economic Stimulus package, using it for investments in the State's infrastructure, and putting Maine people to work," said the Governor.

While Maine and other states eagerly await the influx of federal funds to stimulate an economic recovery, Governor Baldacci said that Maine must continue to move forward with efforts to increase the efficient delivery of government services. The Maine Legislature will begin public hearings next week on the Biennial Budget for fiscal years 2010-2011.

"Maine is challenged by the current global recession, but a consistent, disciplined approach to spending and taxation, a smaller, more modern and more efficient government structure, and smart investments in education, research and development, health care and economic development will usher in a new era of prosperity and strength," said the Governor.

The Web site is http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/Recovery2009.html It is linked from http://www.maine.gov/ and the Governor's Web site: http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/index.shtml

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Governor Thanks Nonprofit Agencies for Working for Maine People

February 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined in the 6th annual Nonprofit Day at the State House by participating in a press conference highlighting the event. The Governor thanked the agencies for their work on behalf of the people of Maine.

"Every aspect of the well-being of our communities is impacted by nonprofits," Governor Baldacci said. "Our nonprofits help educate our children, train our workforce, preserve our lands, and heal our sick. Nonprofits are engaged as partners with the State and with private enterprise."

The Maine Association of Nonprofits presented the Governor with a report entitled "Innovative Nonprofit Practices in Maine: A Good Return on Investment." The report found that Maine's nonprofits contribute $7 billion annually to the State's economy. The report also outlined the various benefits of nonprofit groups collaborating or merging together in an effort to cut costs without cutting services.

The nonprofit agencies on display in the Hall of Flags for Nonprofit Day at the State House were:

Downeast Lakes Land Trust, Grand Lake Stream

Habit for Humanity/7 Rivers, Bath

hear ME now!, New Gloucester

Institute for Financial Literacy, Portland

Literacy Volunteers of Maine

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Sanford

Maine Crafts Association, Dover-Foxcroft

Kennebec Valley Humane Society, Augusta

Operation Homefront, Windham

Oxford County Mental Health Services, Rumford

Presque Isle Historical Society, Presque Isle

Ruth's Reusable Resources, Portland

Woodford's Family Services, Portland

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Governor Announces Nominations

February 9, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced appointments to three boards: the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority; the Finance Authority of Maine; and the Rural Development Authority.

"These individuals bring valuable expertise to the table as we continue to work to strengthen our economy in this challenging global recession," said Governor Baldacci. "These three authorities are crucial to Maine's foundation for economic and job growth. I am pleased to have such highly qualified candidates that are dedicated to serving Maine."

Adam Cote and W. Donald Hudson Jr. are being appointed to the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority. The Authority was created by legislation three years ago to manage implementation of the redevelopment plan for the Naval Air Station Brunswick.

Adam Cote, of Portland, is employed at Global Relief Technologies. He had previously served as an attorney with Pierce Atwood LLP, where he specialized in renewable energy and real estate development matters. He served in Iraq with the 133rd Engineer Battalion and currently remains a member of the Maine Army National Guard. Cote earned his undergraduate degree from Colby College and his law degree from the University of Maine School of Law.

W. Donald Hudson Jr., Ph.D has served 26 years at The Chewonki Foundation. He has led the Foundation as Executive Director and President since 1991. Hudson, of Arrowsic, has served on several professional, community service and business associations, focusing on the areas of the environment and education. He received an undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College, a M.S. from the University of Vermont, and a Ph.D. in ecological and evolutionary biology from Indiana University.

The Governor is appointing Susan Snowden and Michael Mahoney to the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) Board of Directors. Snowden is a reappointment, and Mahoney is a new appointment. FAME supports the start up, expansion and growth plans of Maine's business community and is responsible for administering the State's higher education finance programs.

Susan Snowden, of Scarborough, has worked in the commercial banking industry for 21 years. Since 2005, she has served as Senior Vice President and Small Business Financial Services Manager of Bangor Savings Bank. Prior to this experience, Snowden was Senior Vice President at Key Bank from 1994 to 2005. She has also worked at Fleet Bank and Casco Northern Bank. Snowden earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Maine and an MBA from Bentley College.

Michael Mahoney is an attorney and partner with the firm Federle Mahoney, LLC. Prior to this position, Mahoney served from 2006 to 2008 as Chief Legal Counsel to the Office of the Governor, where he provided guidance in critical legal and policy issues. He served from 2000 to 2006 with the firm Preti,

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Flaherty, Beliveau & Pachios, LLP. Mahoney, who resides in Cape Elizabeth, is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and received his J.D. from Boston College Law School.

The Governor is reappointing Cathy McKelway to the Maine Rural Development Authority Board of Trustees. The Rural Development Authority was created by the Legislature in 2002 to assist Maine communities in realizing their economic development and job creation goals. Specifically, the Authority provides financial assistance to communities for the construction, development or redevelopment of commercial facilities in areas where economic need has not been met by private investment.

Cathy McKelway, of Oakland, recently retired from her position as Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer with Northeast Bank. She is currently self-employed, working on a part-time basis providing grant writing and foreclosure prevention counseling services. She served from 2001 to 2005 as the Executive Director of the not-for-profit MaineStream Finance in Bangor. McKelway is a past board member of the Maine Technology Institute. She received her undergraduate degree from Barnard College.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor's Statement on Robert Kennedy Staying on as University of Maine President

February 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Upon learning of the news that Robert Kennedy will continue serving as the President of the University of Maine, Governor John E. Baldacci today issued the following statement.

"I am pleased to hear that President Kennedy will continue in his role at the State's flagship university. Bob has been a great leader and champion for the University of Maine in his nine years on campus. I look forward to working with him over the next couple of years to continue to move the University and the State forward."

President Kennedy had been under consideration for the president's job at Kansas State University as one of two finalists.

President Kennedy has been president of the University of Maine since April, 2005.

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Governor Baldacci, Maine Chamber of Commerce Support Work by Maine Senators to Support Economic Stimulus

February 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the negotiations occurring between the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"The U.S. economy is on the brink of a catastrophe. Families in Maine and across our country are struggling. People are losing their jobs, losing their homes and losing hope. That cannot be allowed to happen," Governor Baldacci said.

"Working without regard to party labels and destructive partisanship, Maine Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe have demonstrated strong leadership and political courage," Governor Baldacci said. "They are facing intense criticism from their national party leaders and from some Democrats, who have fallen into the trap of counting on federal assistance before a final bill has passed the Congress. The work they are doing to ensure a robust stimulus package transcends the old ways of doing business that have, in the past, slowed progress in Washington."

"Sen. Collins has been instrumental in forming a coalition including Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter and moderate Democrats who have crafted a stimulus package that will create and protect jobs, help our economy to rebound and to prevent an economic decline the likes of which we have not seen for more than 70 years," Governor Baldacci said.

"Sen. Collins and Sen. Snowe, who has done critical work on areas such as improved Medicaid funding and taxes as a senior member of the Finance Committee, have shown that they are willing to put the interests of their country and their state above ideology. The work they are doing is difficult and too often thankless. I fully support their efforts and will do whatever I can to ensure that they are successful in passing a stimulus plan that puts America back to work," Governor Baldacci said.

Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce joins the Governor is supporting the efforts at a bipartisan compromise on the stimulus package.

"Sen. Collins has been at the center of efforts to ensure that we have an appropriate federal response to a national economic crisis," Connors said. "Without her efforts, and the efforts of other moderates like Sen. Snowe, the stimulus would fail. Criticism of their efforts is misplaced and fails to recognize that we need a stimulus plan to pass and for it to pass quickly."

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Maine Adult Education Web Portal Launched

February 11, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of the Maine Adult Education Association to launch the Maine Adult Education Web portal, which offers a searchable, comprehensive list of courses and programs offered throughout the State. The site also enables Mainers to register for courses through the portal.

"Adult Education is an important tool, serving as a crucial resource for Maine people who are completing their high school education course requirements, transitioning into college, expanding their skills and learning new ones," said Governor Baldacci. "This Web site will serve as a convenient tool for Mainers across the State, connecting them to opportunities to expand their education and training, and increasing Maine's competitiveness nationally and internationally for new and expanding business."

The Governor recognized participants during the virtual ribbon cutting of the Web portal, including Bangor Savings Bank for providing key funding, the Maine Adult Education Association, the many programs and educators across the State and RainStorm Consulting, the firm that developed the software for the portal with grants from the Maine Technology Institute.

The Governor said the global economic crisis underscores the need for increased education and workforce development programs.

"Maine Adult Education fills a critical need by helping dislocated workers and those who want to increase their knowledge and skills to better respond to workplace needs," said the Governor. "A sign of the present national recession is a sharp increase in demand for such workforce training and continuing education."

The Maine Department of Education collected fall registration data from around the State and found that those reporting showed a 29% increase in registration over the previous year.

According to the Maine Adult Education Association, since the Web portal went online on January 5, the site has logged more than 11,000 visitors and taken about 500 online registrations.

Governor Baldacci praised the partnerships between adult education programs and the State, including the Maine Departments of Education, Labor and Economic and Community Development.

"We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that our Maine workforce remains second-to-none, and that all Maine families have opportunities for good paying jobs," said the Governor.

The Maine Adult Education Web site is located at www.maineadulted.org

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Governor Baldacci Wishes Bangor a Happy 175th Birthday

February 12, 2009

BANGOR - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined in the celebration to wish the City of Bangor a Happy 175th Birthday. Bangor was incorporated as a city in 1834, after first being incorporated as a town 43 years prior.

"This city is resilient, rising from the Great Fire and diversifying when the golden age of the lumber industry waned," Governor Baldacci said. "As economies and times change, so has Bangor. Today, Bangor is a community rich in opportunities, a regional hub for the arts, commerce and services."

The 175th birthday was marked by a bonfire, cake, refreshments and live music at Bass Park and inside Bangor Auditorium. Governor Baldacci was joined by local dignitaries to mark the occasion.

Governor Baldacci, a Bangor native who was first elected to the Bangor City Council in 1978 and represented the city in the Maine State Senate from 1982 – 1994, praised Bangor as a great place to live, have a family and start a business.

"Bangor's downtown and waterfront are vibrant, attracting cruise ships and cultural events such as the tremendously successful annual American Folk Festival," the Governor said. "Bangor has earned its reputation as a strong and dynamic community - one where people want to raise their children and locate a business. This city has been recognized nationally for its quality of life and for its caring people. I am proud to call myself a native of this great city."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the city now known as Bangor was first settled in 1769 by a group led by Jacob Buswell when the area was known as Condeskeag Plantation; and

WHEREAS, in 1791, Reverend Seth Noble traveled to Boston on behalf of the 567 residents to incorporate the Town of Bangor, which was named for an Irish hymn of the same name written by Rev. Noble; and

WHEREAS, in 1834, Bangor incorporated as a city because of its growth and need for additional services; and

WHEREAS, Bangor is rich with history and historical places including the Hannibal Hamlin House, the home of Hannibal Hamlin, Vice President during Lincoln's first administration; Mt. Hope Cemetery, the nation's first garden cemetery and resting place for Hannibal Hamlin; St. John's Catholic Church, built in 1855 by Irish immigrants; and the Isaac Farrar Mansion/Symphony House, which was built of imported English brick, mahogany from Santo Domingo and slate from Bangor, Wales; and

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WHEREAS, Bangor's downtown district featured one of the nation's first trolley systems and was the bustling hub of Eastern Maine with many businesses, theaters, stores, hotels and marketplaces lining the streets; and

WHEREAS, Bangor continues to be a hub for people and families to live, work and visit with an active arts scene, strong business community, ample shopping, growing waterfront district and family-friendly entertainment throughout the city and the region,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim February 12, 2009 as

CITY OF BANGOR 175TH ANNIVERSARY DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor's Statement on Retirement Announcement of Maine Maritime Academy President

February 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Upon learning that Leonard Tyler has announced that he will retire from his post as president of Maine Maritime Academy in August of next year, Governor John E. Baldacci today issued the following statement.

"Leonard Tyler has been a tremendous advocate and champion for Maine Maritime Academy. Through his four decades of service to the college, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to the school's students, faculty, staff and community. His dedication to Maine Maritime Academy has created an enduring legacy. I appreciate his service and look forward to working with him during this transition over the next year and a half."

President Tyler went to work at the school in 1969 before becoming its president in 1995.

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Governor Proclaims Today as Bob Crowley Day

February 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today hosted the winner of the 17th season of Survivor in his office and proclaimed it "Bob Crowley Day" in his honor.

"Bob Crowley took Maine core values -- honesty, dignity and respect -- and displayed them on a national stage," Governor Baldacci said. "He showed the country what it means to be a true Mainer and how to succeed while still being true to yourself. He is someone who we can all look to as a good role model for our youth, both as a teacher and as a 'Sole Survivor.'"

Crowley was crowned as the Sole Survivor of Survivor Gabon and recipient of the million dollar grand prize on December 14th of last year. At the age of 57, he is the oldest person to win the competition in the show's history and the first from Maine to do so.

Crowley is a teacher at Gorham High School and resides in Portland with his family.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, Robert "Bob" Crowley is a resident of Portland and a physics teacher at Gorham High School; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley graduated from the University of Maine and received a Masters of Education degree from the University of Southern Maine; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley is a hard working individual with a wide range of jobs outside of teaching, including working on a research boat for the Smithsonian in Canada, working as an entomologist for the USDA, and working as a skunk relocater; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley was chosen to participate in the 17th season of the CBS reality show Survivor, known as Survivor Gabon; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley used his skills as a physicist, outdoorsman, Mainer and overall nice guy to be crowned the champion of Survivor Gabon on Dec. 14, 2008; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley received four out of seven votes at the finale, becoming the first Maine resident to win the competition and, at the age of 57, the oldest winner in the history of the show; and

WHEREAS, Bob Crowley continues teaching at Gorham High School, despite his newfound fame, passing on his knowledge and life skills to Maine's youth; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine joins Bob's family – his wife Peggy, sons David and John, daughter Page, and cat William – in being proud of his accomplishments and congratulating him on his success,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim February 17, 2009 as

BOB CROWLEY DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Executive Order Sets Process for Stimulus Oversight and Transparency

February 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an Executive Order to ensure accountability, transparency and Legislative oversight during the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

"With the federal stimulus package signed today by President Obama, we have an opportunity to create jobs, avoid layoffs, make much-needed improvements in our State's infrastructure and invest in education," Governor Baldacci said. "Now it is my responsibility to make sure we act transparently and quickly to get the new funding into the economy and get people back to work."

The Executive Order names Ryan Low, the Commissioner for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, as the State Coordinator for managing stimulus funding.

It also directs all departments, agencies and other instrumentalities of the State to provide all necessary data, reports and information to guarantee full and complete disclosure of how stimulus funding is being used.

The information will be presented on a State of Maine American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Web site, which can be found at www.maine.gov. The Web site will allow users to follow federal stimulus money as it comes into Maine and as it is awarded in contracts. The Web site will also allow users to see where projects are located and track the number of jobs created.

"My administration is committed to providing as much information as possible about how federal stimulus dollars are being invested," Governor Baldacci said. "While we will push to put these funds to work quickly, we must also make the process completely open for scrutiny."

In addition, the Executive Order also formalizes a process for Legislative oversight and participation in allocating stimulus funding.

Each agency is required to provide notice and briefing to its Legislative oversight committee or committees regarding the receipt and uses of recovery funds. Funds will only be allocated by financial order, which must be presented to the oversight committee or committees before being submitted to the Governor for final approval.

"I believe that this system will allow for appropriate Legislative oversight of stimulus funding while also providing the flexibility necessary to move fast," Governor Baldacci said. "We are dealing with an unprecedented fiscal situation and an unprecedented federal response. As we move forward, I am prepared to modify this process if necessary to improve the results."

Governor Baldacci discussed the Executive Order with Legislative leaders early today and will discuss it further during meetings later today.

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The text of the Executive Order follows.

25FY 08/09

February 17, 2009

AN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT TRANSPARENCY AND OVERSIGHT REGARDING THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

WHEREAS, President Obama and the United States Congress have enacted a comprehensive federal economic stimulus package to create jobs and implement the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009," hereinafter referred to as "the Act," a package of supplemental appropriations, tax credits and tax relief for the preservation and creation of jobs, investment in needed infrastructure, promotion of energy efficiency, science and health, the provision of assistance to the unemployed and for state and local fiscal stabilization; and

WHEREAS, the Act will provide the State of Maine with significant federal assistance to be used in a manner consistent with the purposes described above; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the State to manage fiscal stimulus resources in a manner that is prudent, accountable and transparent and in a manner that is as expeditious as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the State to be prepared for the immediate receipt of stimulus funds which, in turn, must be obligated within very constrained timeframes, so as to ensure investments are infused into the economy as quickly as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the State to provide the federal government with timely, comprehensive reports on the uses and management of stimulus funds and to comply with all accountability requirements of the Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the following:

The Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services will serve as the State Coordinator for the management of fiscal stimulus funds flowing to the State as a result of the enactment of the Act; the Commissioner will be responsible for the State's administration of and compliance with the accountability and transparency requirements of the Act;

All departments, agencies and other instrumentalities of the State shall cooperate with the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and shall provide all data, reports and information related to the receipt and use of stimulus monies that he may request in the manner he so prescribes, in an accurate and timely manner.

To ensure the Legislative oversight and participation and the highest degree of accountability possible, each dollar of stimulus funding received by State government will be required to be allotted by financial order. Each agency will be required to provide notice and briefing to its legislative oversight committee or committees regarding the receipt and uses of recovery monies reflected in each individual financial

order, prior to submitting that financial order for the review and approval of the State Budget Officer and the Governor.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 17, 2009.

(Signed)

John E. Baldacci, Governor

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Will Travel to National Governors Association Meeting

February 20, 2009

President Obama Meeting Among Agenda Items

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci will depart Saturday, Feb. 21, for Washington, D.C., to participate in the 2009 National Governors Association (NGA) Winter Conference. The three-day conference will focus the fiscal health of the states and will include discussion topics of infrastructure needs, renewable energy development, transportation, and foreclosure issues, among others.

"With the backdrop of the international economic crisis and the administration of the federal stimulus funds, states are under tremendous pressure," said Governor Baldacci. "Working together, our nation's governors are able to provide critical information to the Obama Administration as we all work to lay a solid foundation for economic growth and to get Americans back to work. I look forward to joining my colleagues and continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion to address the concerns of hardworking American families and businesses."

Governor Baldacci will also be meeting with the Coalition of Northeastern Governors and the New England Governors' Conference during the weekend. Topics of importance for these meetings include surface transportation, energy infrastructure and regional issues impacting economic recovery.

The Governor said that while Maine and the rest of the country face significant financial challenges, there are opportunities to put people back to work in the short-term and prepare for long-term economic stability.

"My Administration is working with the Maine State Legislature, municipalities, the Maine Congressional Delegation and the Obama Administration to ensure that every dollar of federal stimulus funds is used to get maximum benefit for Maine people," said the Governor. "The nation's governors have a unique opportunity to invest in crucial infrastructure and other development that will spur recovery now and strengthen our economy into the future."

For more information on the federal stimulus package and its impact on Maine, please visit www.maine.gov/recovery

State of Maine
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Digital Archive

Governor Celebrates Composite Construction Growth

February 20, 2009

ORONO - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Sen. Susan Collins, Rep. Mike Michaud, Dr. Habib Dagher of the Maine Advanced Engineering Wood Composites Center and others to announce two new composite construction material companies that have begun operating in Maine.

"The real-world application of composite technology developed at the University of Maine is benefiting our infrastructure and our economy," said Governor Baldacci. "The new bridge technologies will reduce construction time, increase the lifespan of bridges, and create jobs in our State."

The Governor highlighted past R&D bonds that Maine voters approved that have supported the Maine Advanced Engineering Wood Composites Center, as well as the 2008 law initiated by the Baldacci Administration that included the commitment to expand composite technologies while improving bridge safety.

The Neal Bridge in Pittsfield already has been completed using an inflatable composite arch design. The Governor said that the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) will be committing at least $6 million in its 2010-2011 Biennial Capital Work Plan for composite bridges and infrastructure. In March, Maine DOT will meet with University and private sector partners to discuss expanded use and potential for composites in transportation.

The Governor said that composites hold great promise in other sectors as well.

"These construction technologies also have applications beyond bridges, such as wind turbines and offshore wind structures, with the potential of creating more clean energy jobs in Maine," said the Governor.

The University of Maine is building an addition to the Maine Advanced Engineering Wood Composites laboratory to conduct wind energy R&D, and to help Maine be a world leader in wind and offshore wind energy technologies. The goal is to be able to manufacture such applications in Maine.

"There is tremendous value in the research being done by the talented students and faculty," said the Governor. "Dr. Habib Dagher, the composites laboratory and their partners are taking technology out of the classroom and putting it to work for Maine."

The Governor said that the private sector is using these new technologies to grow business. At the event today were officials from two new spinoff companies: Advanced Infrastructure Technologies and Harbor Technologies.

Advanced Infrastructure Technologies, located in Orono, will be commercializing the technology that was used for the Neal Bridge construction. In the future, the company expects to design and kit the bridges in Maine and ship them across the country.

Harbor Technologies in Brunswick has been working with composite piling and beam technology. The company expects to add 20 new positions this spring and summer, with more in the future.

For more information about the composites research at the University of Maine, please visit: http://www.aewc.umaine.edu/

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Mourns Passing of Arthur Stilphen, Former Commissioner of Public Safety

February 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of Arthur Stilphen, former Commission of Public Safety for Governor Joseph Brennan.

"Arthur Stilphen was a reform-minded and innovative leader for Maine's State Police and Department of Public Safety. He was instrumental in the development of Maine's crime laboratory, and helped to modernize law enforcement in our State," Governor Baldacci said. "Arthur will be sorely missed."

UPDATE: Weather Delay: State Government Late on Feb. 23; Opening at Noon in Aroostook; 10 a.m. Rest of State

February 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Maine State Government except in Aroostook County will open at 10 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 23, 2009, due to the winter storm that is impacting most of the State. State offices in Aroostook County will open at noon.

The snow is heavy and has caused sporadic power outages. Winds are blowing the snow, reducing visibility.

Governor John E. Baldacci urges people to avoid unnecessary travel this morning.

State of Maine
StateDocs
Digital Archive

Governor Declares Emergency to Help Restore Power

February 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has issued an Emergency Declaration extending the hours of service for power crews to help restore electricity.

The Emergency Declaration was issued at 9 a.m. today to expedite power restoration for the households and businesses in the State currently without electricity.

Governor Baldacci participated in several calls yesterday and this morning and has been fully briefed on the winter storm. He remains in close contact with officials at the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

The Governor has been in Washington, D.C., since Saturday participating in the 2009 National Governors Association (NGA) Winter Conference. The Governor, who was originally to remain at the NGA winter meeting throughout the remainder of the day, has changed his plans to return to Maine this afternoon.

The State of Emergency proclamation will facilitate a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to extend the hours of service for electrical workers and allow additional crews from other states to assist with repairs.

The text of the Emergency Declaration follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is experiencing a severe winter storm that has left thousands of Maine homes and businesses out of power; and

WHEREAS, work crews will have to work many hours to restore power; and

WHEREAS, power restoration crews will be requested from other states and potentially from Canadian provinces to assist in power restoration; and

WHEREAS, federal rules determine the number of hours the driver of an electrical line repair vehicle may operate; and

WHEREAS, drivers of such vehicles must cease operations when they reach the federal limit on hours of operation, and therefore would have to cease power restoration; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if power cannot be restored to Maine homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation, pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts 390 through 399 subject to the limitations described below, and therefore allow these power crews to operate additional hours and otherwise operate effectively in this situation,

NOW THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B M.R.S.A. section 742, and for the purpose pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules, specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of February 23, 2009.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Visits Crews Working to Restore Power in Brunswick

February 24, 2009

BRUNSWICK - Governor John E. Baldacci today visited with crews working to restore power in the Brunswick-Bath area. The Governor joined Central Maine Power (CMP) President Sara Burns at the CMP Operations Center and at the Cook's Corner Fire Station in Brunswick before surveying some of the damage.

As of mid-day, CMP was reporting more than 58,000 customers without power and Bangor Hydro was reporting about 5,800 customers without power. Brunswick remains one of the most affected areas with more than 28,000 homes without power.

Governor Baldacci said that Mainers have been through this before and to practice the same forms of caution and concern that have been used in the past.

"Be patient, look out for your neighbors, your family and yourself," the Governor said. "Stay warm and make use of the resources available through 2-1-1. We are making all of the resources we have available to help our citizens through the after-effects of this storm while crews are working hard to restore power."

Governor Baldacci met with several line crews from CMP and crews from Massachusetts and Connecticut who have come to the State to help restore power quickly.

Sara Burns of CMP says that power should be fully restored to the company's entire service area by Thursday.

State of Maine
StateDocs
Digital Archive

Governor Announces Start Up of Former Red Shield Mill

February 24, 2009

Example of Forest Products Industry Success

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined conservation and forest products industry stakeholders at the University of Maine to celebrate achievements in forest sustainability and the development of value-added technologies. The Governor also announced that the former Red Shield Acquisition operation, now known as Old Town Fuel & Fiber, is restarting its pulp facility, putting 90 workers back on the job with an expected total of 170 workers being employed in coming weeks.

"In the midst of a national recession, when daily headlines are focused on downsizing companies, we are announcing the re-opening and re-tooling of a Maine facility in one of our State's most important industries," said the Governor. "This is a great day for Old Town and for the hardworking people of the community."

The Governor said that Maine's forests are the foundation of the State's economy, quality of life, tradition and character. Forest products alone contribute more than $10 billion to Maine's economy and employ more than 19,000 people. Forest-based recreation contributes more than $1 billion and another 12,000 jobs.

"Maine is well-placed to continue to be a leader in forest products, especially with the new opportunities for converting from fossil fuels to wood and other clean energy, renewable sources," said Governor Baldacci. "A core component of the Old Town Fuel & Fiber operation is using technology developed at the University of Maine to create biofuels, creating renewable energy resources from our forest products. The company's leadership will serve as a model to others, represent the ingenuity of Mainers, and demonstrate that the forest products industry will continue to prosper and thrive in our state. This benefits the industry, our environment and decreases our dependency on fossil fuels."

Five years ago the Governor initiated the Maine Woods Legacy as a path forward to conserve the natural heritage of the Maine woods in a way that supports diverse economic opportunities. The Governor pointed to growth in green certification, the Northeast Master Logger Certification Program and nature-based tourism that showcase the cultural heritage of Maine communities as signs of progress in the goals of the Maine Woods Legacy.

The Governor also pointed to the recently released Atlantica BioEnergy report, a joint effort of government and industry in Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This international initiative highlighted Maine's existing forest industry and included 15 recommendations to improve the forest products industry.

The report complements two efforts underway that will provide us with recommendations to advance the industry.

A diverse group of stakeholders called "Keeping Maine's Forests" has convened. The group will be assessing the economic challenges facing Maine's forest landowners and developing proposals to help maintain the integrity of the forests' resources. Additionally, this past September, the New England Governors created a blue-ribbon commission to advise them on current land conservation challenges.

Governor Baldacci praised partnerships that unite the compatible goals of economic development and conservation.

"Maine industry leaders have continued to demonstrate that economic and environmental prosperity are not mutually exclusive," said the Governor.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Celebrates Announcement of NBA Development League Team in Portland

February 25, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from the City of Portland, the NBA D-League and Boston Celtics President Rich Gotham to celebrate the announcement that Portland has been awarded a development league team for the 2009-2010 season. The announcement comes more than a year after NBA officials were in Portland to tour the city and basketball facilities to determine the likelihood of an NBA Development League franchise in the city.

"Basketball in Maine has a rich history and a strong tradition," Governor Baldacci said. "We have cultivated some superior basketball players and coaches. It is only fitting that today we get to add a new chapter to Maine's story with the addition of an NBA Development team and the return of professional basketball to Maine."

Governor Baldacci commended the people of Portland and the citizens of Maine for embracing its minor league sports franchises.

There are currently 16 NBA Development League teams and the league continues to expand throughout the country.

The Portland franchise will play its home games at the Portland Exposition Building. More information and free, live streaming for all D-League games will be on the Web at http://www.d-league.com/

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Receives Climate Change Report from University of Maine Scientists

February 25, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received a detailed report on the effects of greenhouse gas and other pollutants on Maine's climate. The report: "Maine's Climate Future: An Initial Assessment," investigates the progression of climate change and its impact on the State of Maine. The Governor had requested the analysis from the University of Maine to assist his Administration and the Legislature in determining ways to address climate change now and into the future.

"It's abundantly clear that climate change has and will continue to have an enormous impact on Maine," said the Governor. "This report illustrates the many aspects of our daily life, including our environment and our economy, that are affected by greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants."

The Governor thanked Dr. George Jacobson and Dr. Ivan Fernandez of the University's Climate Change Institute for leading the team that developed the report. University of Maine scientists and others volunteered their time and expertise to produce the report. The University of Maine team noted that this initial assessment is designed to frame future investigations and policy discussions on strategies to address climate change and energy issues.

"Maine has already demonstrated leadership in this area, and I intend for us to continue to be a leader," said the Governor. "Maine State government has taken action to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions, becoming the first state to purchase 100 percent of our electricity from zero-carbon, renewable resources. We were one of the first states to heat State buildings with biodiesel, and are a member of the nation's first cap-and-trade program designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are also continuing to promote energy efficiency and the development of our vast wind, solar and tidal power resources."

Governor Baldacci said that he is pleased that Maine now has a partner in Washington, D.C., who understands the importance of addressing climate change. He pledged to continue to work with the Obama Administration and the Maine Congressional Delegation to support development of clean, renewable energy, among other policies that will impact climate change.

"President Obama appreciates that investing in clean power is not only good for the environment, it is good for the economy," said the Governor. "The green economy will create good jobs in Maine and help wean us from imported fossil fuels."

The Governor said that while Maine must redouble its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we also must prepare for the changes that past emissions have already set in motion and that cannot be stopped. The Governor is directing State agencies to work closely with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to help identify actions the State can take to get ready for a changed climate. Governor Baldacci also stated his support for Senator Simpson's legislation, LD 460, A Resolve to

Evaluate Climate Change Adaptation Options for the State of Maine, and said that he will work for its passage.

For more information about the University of Maine's Climate Change Institute and to download the report, visit http://www.climatechange.umaine.edu/mainesclimatefuture/

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Commemorates 100 Years of Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine

February 25, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed February 25, 2009, as Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine Centennial Celebration Day in the State of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation during a celebration event held at the organization's Portland clubhouse.

"The youth who come here are instilled with a sense of belonging, and they gain skills and friendships that help them develop, and learn and grow," Governor Baldacci said. "They know that here they are understood and accepted for who they are. The dedication of the staff, volunteers and interns at these clubs makes a big difference in children's lives."

In addition to the proclamation, Governor Baldacci brought to the celebration a State of Maine flag that was flown over the Maine State Capitol in honor of the milestone. The Governor was joined by Boston Celtics legend K.C. Jones, who had joined the Governor at the announcement that the City of Portland had been awarded an NBA D-League franchise earlier in the day.

Governor Baldacci and K.C. Jones each signed four commemorative banners for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine. The organization says that more events will be planned throughout the year to mark the group's centennial.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine is celebrating 100 years as the Positive Place for Kids; and

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine serves more than 2,500 youth annually in Portland, South Portland, Riverton Park and Lewiston/Auburn and has served more than 100,000 young people over the past 100 years; and

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine seeks to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need the Clubs most, to realize their full potential as responsible, productive and caring citizens; and

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine is recognized as a place where all kids and teens are able to go and belong, a place that provides educational, artistic and athletic opportunities for youth, and a place that prepares young people for the future; and

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine is responsive to the emerging and growing needs of its members, families and communities and is committed to reaching more young people and deepening its impacts on its members; and

WHEREAS, Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine will continue to work to ensure that Maine's young people are offered a safe and supportive environment with quality programs and caring staff,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim February 25, 2009 as

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF SOUTHERN MAINE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Pike Industries as Apparent Low Bidder on I-295 Project

February 26, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that Pike Industries is the apparent low bidder for the major interstate rehabilitation of I-295 Northbound. This project represents the first use of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed by President Obama last week.

"The I-295 Northbound project is our top highway priority and the largest single project proposed by the Maine Department of Transportation for recovery funds," Governor Baldacci said. "The road was built in the early 1970s, and it is failing. Interstate 295 is crucial to Maine's economy. It is a major artery in our State. It connects people and our cities. It moves the things we make and helps bring tourists into our State."

Pike Industries office in Lewiston issued a bid of $31,469,000 to complete the project. Estimates from the Federal Highway Administration and the State's experience rehabilitating the I-295 Southbound lanes last year show that more than 840 jobs will be created by this project. For the I-295 Southbound project last year, an estimated 95 percent of people employed were Maine residents.

"This project will put Mainers back to work," the Governor said, "and we all know that a good job is the best social program."

The recovery funds in addition to funds from other sources already allotted for transportation work projects total about $423 million in road and bridge investments for this construction season in Maine.

Governor Baldacci praised President Obama and Maine's Congressional Delegation for their work on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, saying that it is producing results within two weeks of being signed into law.

"The economic recovery package is already starting to put people back to work here in Maine and around the country," Governor Baldacci said. "It wouldn't have been possible without the commitment of President Obama and his administration, and the hard work and courage of Maine's Congressional Delegation. Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and Congressman Mike Michaud laid the foundation for a strong package of investments in critical areas like health care, transportation, education and new energy technology."

Governor Baldacci continued, "Then they passed the baton to Maine's two United States Senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins who showed tremendous courage, putting the best interests of their State and their country ahead of ideology and partisan pressure. They delivered for Maine."

Earlier in the week, the Maine DOT released its list of proposed projects for the State. Governor Baldacci says the list of projects with recovery funds, combined with existing transportation funds will create 11,000 jobs throughout the State this construction season.

"By investing in transportation projects, we invest in our people and in our business, and we connect them to the markets where I know they can compete with anyone," Governor Baldacci said. "In addition to the recovery money that will support this project and many more, Maine will be investing more than $279 million additional dollars in work that will begin this construction season."

Once the State receives proper documentation from Pike Industries and the apportionment of funds from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Commissioner of Transportation will sign the agreement and a written contract will be issued. Work is expected to begin on the project as soon as the snow has melted and the road should be re-opened to traffic by mid-August.

More information about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and how it affects Maine can be found online at http://www.maine.gov/recovery.

State of Maine
StateDocs
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Governor Baldacci's Statement on the Death of Harrison Richardson

February 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of former State Senator and State Representative Harrison L. Richardson.

"Harry was a staunch environmentalist who cared deeply about clean water and land conservation," Governor Baldacci said. "He was an environmental titan who was ahead of his time. He took public service seriously and looked to reach across the aisle on the issues important to him."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Grand Opening of 300 Ton Wood Pellet Depot

February 26, 2009

LEWISTON – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the grand opening of a 300-ton wood pellet depot at The Heutz Oil Facility in Lewiston. The facility is the second regional pellet storage facility in the State.

"We must move forward with decreasing our dependency on foreign, expensive and polluting energy," Governor Baldacci said. "Kicking the oil habit will keep valuable financial resources of hard working Maine families and businesses here in the State, and we will decrease harmful carbon emissions. It will also create and sustain new green businesses and jobs right here in Maine."

The Governor congratulated Tim Heutz, Vice President of Heutz Oil, and Maine Energy Systems Principle Les Otten, who were both at the grand opening. Lewiston Mayor Larry Gilbert and Auburn Mayor John Jenkins also offered congratulations at the celebration.

The Governor said that work being done by both the public and private sectors is making a difference environmentally and economically in Maine.

"Having the private sector fully engaged in this area is critical to achieving our long-term goals of ensuring that more of the dollars of our hardworking Maine families stay here in the State, and that our environment is protected," the Governor said. "We'll grow industries and jobs in the emerging environment and energy sectors and we'll build it all right here in Maine."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Weatherization Courses Now Offered Statewide Through Interactive Television

February 27, 2009

Training will be broadcast at 14 University of Maine campuses/centers

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that weatherization training courses are now available to Mainers statewide. MaineHousing and the University of Maine system are teaming up to help people take advantage of new job opportunities in the home weatherization field.

"Weatherization is a growing field with great growth potential, and it serves the dual purpose of making our housing more energy efficient at the same time," said Governor John E. Baldacci in announcing the new initiative.

"With the new federal recovery package expected to finance even more weatherization efforts, this increased training could not come at a better time. Maine is well-positioned to use whatever additional federal funds become available and weatherize even more Maine homes, reducing our energy use and our reliance on imported foreign heating oil."

Starting March 3, people interested in learning how to become Weatherization Technicians can receive their training via Interactive Television (ITV) at one of 14 University of Maine campuses and centers throughout Maine.

"The University of Maine at Augusta is happy to be part of this timely effort to bring weatherization training to communities across Maine," said Dr. Allyson Hughes Handley, UMA President. "This program is yet another example of our partnership with Maine State Government and with other organizations to deliver cost-efficient solutions to statewide training needs."

MaineHousing will offer the training course, which will be broadcast from the Bennett Katz Library at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). The course runs for 3 ½ weeks, meeting Tuesdays from 7-9:45 p.m. and Thursdays from 4-6:45 p.m.

The course will be broadcast at the following University of Maine campuses and centers: Bangor, Bath, Dover-Foxcroft, East Millinocket, Ellsworth, Houlton, Machias, Presque Isle, Rockland, Rumford, Saco, Sanford, South Paris and Wiscasset.

MaineHousing has been conducting traditional classroom Weatherization Technician training courses since fall and has trained more than 100 people so far. But more people with weatherization skills are needed, MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick said.

"We are seeing a growing demand for people with weatherization skills right now," she said. "This is a real opportunity for people seeking employment, or for building contractors who want to expand their expertise and job market."

McCormick noted that many of the publicly funded weatherization programs require technicians to be certified through MaineHousing. People taking the course and passing the test at the end will be certified.

Weatherization – making homes more energy efficient, reducing use of imported heating fuel, and reducing our carbon footprint – is a priority of both President Obama and Governor Baldacci, McCormick noted.

Weatherization technicians are professionals in demand and people who receive the training can seek assistance with employment through the Maine Department of Labor's network of CareerCenters. Some individuals might qualify for training funds for this course; they should visit a CareerCenter to inquire further. To locate a CareerCenter or get help finding a job, people can go to http://www.mainecareercenter.com/ or call 1-888-457-8883/TTY: 1-800-794-1110.

Persons interested in taking the training course can sign up by contacting Kathy Abbondanzio of MaineHousing at 624-5716 or kabbondanzio@mainehousing.org. Information on registration is also posted on our Web site at www.mainehousing.org. The cost of the course is $250.

For more information on the weatherization program, visit www.mainehousing.org

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Restaurant Week in Maine

February 27, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed March 1 – 10, 2009, as Restaurant Week in the State of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation in conjunction with RestaurantWeekME, a promotion highlighting 70 Maine restaurants with specially-priced menus during the week.

"Maine has some of the finest restaurants in the country," Governor Baldacci said. "We are known for not only fine cuisine, but also for unique restaurant offerings and atmospheres. Dining out has become not just about the meal itself, but the overall experience, and RestaurantWeekME is a terrific way to highlight these small businesses."

Those that wish to take advantage of the specially priced menus are encouraged to make reservations early and mention the Restaurant Week promotion.

For more information on RestaurantWeekME and a list of participating restaurants, visit http://www.restaurantweekme.com./

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has become a culinary destination to rival any around the country with the quality of chefs and restaurants in the state as well as events such as Harvest on the Harbor, Maine Fare, Taste of the Nation and more; and

WHEREAS, RestaurantWeekME will assist Maine-based businesses during a slower time of the year, and simultaneously encourage the public's support of local businesses during particularly difficult national economic times; and

WHEREAS, RestaurantWeekME will bolster community participation by offering a reasonably priced culinary event, accessible to a wide audience;

WHEREAS, RestaurantWeekME is modeled after similar events in other food-conscious parts of the country including New York, Boston, Miami and Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine supports its small businesses, and embraces a Maine culinary economy in which we are known for the quality of our food, chefs, restaurants and events,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim March 1 – 10, 2009 as

RESTAURANT WEEK ME

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine
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Governor Baldacci's Statement on Expected Nomination of Governor Sebelius as Secretary of HHS

February 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement tonight on the expected nomination of Governor Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Governor Sebelius was an early leader in the area of health care reform, and has built a national reputation for improving access to quality health care," Governor Baldacci said. "I've known Governor Sebelius since we were both elected in 2003. She is an impressive leader, a dedicated public servant and strong advocate for health care reform. President Obama has made a wise choice to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services."

State Government Closed for Monday, March 2, 2009

March 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Maine State government will be closed today, March 2, 2009, due to the severe winter storm that is affecting much of the State.

Governor John E. Baldacci urges people to avoid unnecessary travel today.

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State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Nominations

March 3, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced appointments to three boards: the University of Maine System Trustees; the Harness Racing Commission; and the Board of Pesticides Control.

Eleanor M. Baker and Kevin P. McCarthy are being appointed to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees.

Baker is a principal at Baker Newman Noyes. A founder of the company, Baker had served with KPMG, which had been acquired by Baker Newman Noyes in 1995. She had been with KPMG since 1977. Baker, a Cape Elizabeth resident, has served on the Maine Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission. She has also served on the Board of Visitors of the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine Law School. Baker has served on the Board of the University of Maine Foundation. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Maine, her J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law, and an LL.M. in taxation from Boston University.

McCarthy, of Falmouth, is the president and CEO of Unum Group. He has been with the company for 30 years. McCarthy has served as a director on a number of boards, including the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. He had served as Chair of the Advisory Council for the University of Southern Maine School of Business. McCarthy is a graduate of the University of Southern Maine.

"I am confident that these talented individuals will promote the University of Maine System and highlight why Maine is a great place for students to learn and to build a career," said Governor Baldacci.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall operation, maintenance, and supervision of the University of Maine System. The Board is the entity that approves the establishment and elimination of academic programs, confers tenure on faculty members, and sets tuition rates and operating budgets.

Governor Baldacci is reappointing Sidney Todd Bradley, of Easton, to the Harness Racing Commission. Bradley has served on the commission since 2007. He is employed at the Maine Farmers Exchange. Bradley has 20 years of experience in the harness racing industry as an owner, trainer and breeder. He has served on the Maine Potato Board and currently serves on the Easton School Board, where he is vice-chair.

Curtis Bohlen, of Yarmouth, is a new appointment to the Board of Pesticides Control. Bohlen is director of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership. He has served as a research scientist and independent consultant, and has taught environmental policy courses at Colby College and Bates College. Bohlen currently serves on the Board of Directors of Maine Rivers and had served from 2004 to 2007 on the Board of the Androscoggin River Alliance. He earned a B.S. and an M.S. at Stanford University, and a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University.

The nominations must be reviewed by the respective committees of oversight of the above boards and commissions and confirmed by the Senate.

State of Maine
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Governor Applauds Youth Apprentice Composites Program

March 3, 2009

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the kickoff of The Compass Project Youth Apprentice Program. The Compass Project held an open house to highlight the program at the Maine Advanced Technology Center at Southern Maine Community College in Brunswick.

The Youth Apprentice Program introduces high school juniors and seniors to skills in boat building, working in a shop environment, proper tool use, as well as resume and interview skills. The Governor said that it is important to pass on information about boat building to Maine youth, encouraging involvement in one of Maine's oldest industries.

"This program is all about the students and what you are able to do with the knowledge and training for our State and its future," Governor Baldacci said. "Boat building is one common denominator in Maine's history. We have tremendous leadership in the industry up and down the coast of this State. We have heard the expression that Maine built is best built and our children are learning skills from some of the best and brightest in the industry."

The Youth Apprentice Program is a collaboration between The Compass Project, Jobs for Maine's Graduates, Southern Maine Community College's Maine Advanced Technology Center, public schools and Maine's marine industry.

The Governor told the students that they are learning about an industry in which Maine is seen as a leader.

"Maine has become a brand name in terms of boat building," the Governor said. "When you hear Maine, it is associated with the highest quality, pride and craftsmanship. I hear that from people all around the country and all over the world. With programs in place like the Youth Apprentice Program, we can look forward to continued success and leadership in the boatbuilding industry."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the open house by eight students from Morse High School who are participating in the program, as well as officials involved in the program and the boat building industry.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Presents Maine Native Harness Racer with USA Driving Colors for International Competition

March 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented Jason Bartlett with USA driving colors to represent Maine and the United States in the 2009 World Driving Championship. Bartlett accepted an invitation from the U.S. Trotting Association to represent the country in the competition to be held in Norway May 14-20.

"Harness racing is an important sport in Maine – to our economy, our history and our culture," Governor Baldacci said. "When you are in Norway, you'll be representing not only your country, but also your State. We wish you well and the entire State of Maine will be cheering you on."

Jason Bartlett is a native of Augusta and is a former small-college All-American basketball player. He began racing at the age of 17 in 1998 on the Maine fair circuit and at commercial tracks throughout New England before advancing to larger raceways in New York and Pennsylvania. He currently ranks fourth among all North American drivers in terms of races won this year with 520. Last year he received the Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers' Association.

The World Driving Championship is the oldest driving competition in harness racing. It is contested biannually in conjunction with the World Trotting Conference.

For more information on the United States Trotting Association, visit http://www.ustrotting.com/

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Governor Baldacci Releases Details of Investment Strategy

March 4, 2009

Plan Focuses on Job Creation, Economic Growth, Energy Independence

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of a three-year, $306 million investment strategy that will create jobs and strengthen Maine's economy.

"Two weeks ago, President Obama signed the most significant economic recovery law in modern history," Governor Baldacci said. "But we all know that the recovery package can't address all of Maine's needs. We must do our part to create jobs and strengthen our economy."

The Governor's proposed bond package makes critical investments in energy independence, highways and bridges, passenger and freight rail, higher education, innovation and the environment.

"Maine's economy depends on good roads and bridges, a highly educated workforce, innovative thinking and our State's trademark quality of life to attract and sustain new jobs," Governor Baldacci said. "The investments I'm proposing today will complement the Recovery Act, putting Mainers back to work."

The investment package includes:

• $127.8 million for transportation projects, including roads, bridges, rail, ferries and aviation;

• $52 million for energy upgrades and building improvements at the State's universities, community colleges and Maine Maritime Academy;

• $15.5 million for energy conservation and the development of offshore wind power;

• $67.5 million for competitive research and development grants, economic development and the redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station; and

• $43.4 million for the Land for Maine's Future, working water fronts, clean water and environmental protection.

"We know we must make these investments," Governor Baldacci said. "Our economy depends on investing in our people, and giving them the tools they need to be successful."

The Governor has talked with both Democratic and Republican leaders in the Legislature and believes that a strong, bipartisan bond package can be enacted quickly.

"I am confident that we can all work together to pass an aggressive investment package. While I know that there will be competing interests as this package is debated, I believe that Maine has shown that its political leaders can put aside partisan differences and work together to put the best interest of our people first."

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If enacted, Governor Baldacci's investment package will go to voters in two rounds of voting, with $265.8 million on the November ballot and $40.4 million on the June 2010 ballot.

"Economic recovery requires a sustained effort," Governor Baldacci said. "This investment strategy demonstrates our commitment to creating jobs and growing our economy."

The 2009 Bond Package – Description and Amounts can be found at: http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/finances.html

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Governor Directs DOT Action on Aroostook County Highway Project

March 4, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that he has instructed the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to advance an Aroostook County transportation project so that construction can begin in 2010. The Caribou Connector included in the Aroostook County Transportation Study will become a stand-alone project separate from the Presque Isle Bypass Segment.

The Governor held a meeting in his office late this afternoon to ask stakeholders for input on advancing the plans to move forward with the Caribou project. Attending in person were State Rep. John Martin of Eagle Lake, who arranged the meeting, and other members of the Aroostook County Legislative Delegation and MaineDOT Commissioner David Cole. Joining via phone were town officials and civic leaders from Houlton, Fort Kent, Caribou and Presque Isle.

"This segment of the Aroostook County Transportation Study is ready to go forward, and the people of Aroostook County are eager for work to begin," said Governor Baldacci. "The Caribou Connector will play an important role in the infrastructure development planned in Aroostook County, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Maine legislators, Congressional Delegation and people of the County to improve the critical connections that will open up new opportunities in the region."

MaineDOT will expedite the construction of the Caribou Connector in the 2010 construction season utilizing existing resources obtained by the State's Congressional Delegation. The two segments within the Caribou Connector are estimated to cost $20 million.

MaineDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) received an alignment approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Sept. 18, 2008, regarding the Caribou segment, but are still awaiting a similar approval from the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Presque Isle Bypass Segment. The work on the Presque Isle Segment will continue unabated, and the planning work is expected to be complete by the 2011 construction season.

To accomplish this, MaineDOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration to separate the Caribou and Presque Isle projects in the current study. Current federal High Priority Project funding will be used for the Caribou project.

More details on the agreement for moving forward with the Caribou project will be forthcoming, including specific timetables for the process.

The Caribou Connector Alternative is available for viewing online in the following document on Page 4-7 and is identified as Alternative 4B:http://www.vhb.com/aroostook/pdfs/Caribou-ConnectorPhaseIICompleteFINALwsignatureslowres.pdf

Governor Baldacci also released information on the Aroostook County transportation investments for 2009, which are to be conducted with existing State work funds. The list is attached below.

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AROOSTOOK COUNTY 2009 TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

ROAD & BRIDGE

Hodgdon Stream Bridge Replacement: $ 967,120.00

Oakfield: Village Bridge Replacement. $ 3,600,000.00

Wallagrass: Wallagrass Bridge Replacement$ 1,600,000.00

Wallagrass: Route 11 Highway Reconstruction: $ 6,518,148.00

Castle Hill: Route 163 Highway Reconstruction: $ 4,615,307.00

Fort Kent: Route 1, Pave Rehabilitation: $ 4,435,628.00

Aroostook Region Wide: Crack Seal Region 5. Anticipated areas in Caswell, Fort Fairfield, Weston and Crystal. $ 155,091.00

New Sweden: Bearsley Brook Bridge Replacement: $495,000.00

Houlton: New Sidewalks, Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility Improvement. $ 145,000.00

Aroostook Safe Routes to School Caribou. $ 8,237.00

Aroostook Safe Routes to School Fort Fairfield. $ 118,920.00

Weston: Bancroft Road Culvert Replacement. $ 164,378.00

Traffic Engineering Presque Isle: Intersection Improvement: Interconnection and coordination of the Route 1 traffic signals. $ 784,800.00

Road & Bridge Total ---- $ 23,607,629

AVIATION PROJECTS

Frenchville Northern Aroostook Regional Airport Authority

Snow Removal Equipment Building

$210,526

Presque Isle Northern Maine Regional Airport

Design Only for Airport Perimeter Fencing and Taxiway "A" Extension

$620,851

Houlton Houlton International Airport

Reconstruction of Runway 5-23

$5,130,000

Aviation Total --- $5, 961,377

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The regional provider, Aroostook Transportation services, is receiving $75,000 for one bus in current program.

Recovery Funding for busses have yet to be allocated.

Public Transportation Total --- $75,000

TOTAL OF ALL AROOSTOOK COUNTY 2009 FUNDING: $29,644,006

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Governor Baldacci Directs Response to Announced Plant Closures

March 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today assigned top-level officials from his administration to work on plant closures in Baileyville and Wells.

"Maine will not sit idly by while a national recession steals jobs from communities around our State," Governor Baldacci said. "I have assigned Rosaire Pelletier, a paper industry expert, to work with Domtar and try to find a way to keep the mill open. And I have assigned Commissioner Laura Fortman to work closely with the Town of Wells and York County on the announced closing of RR Donnelley."

In addition, the Department of Labor will deploy Rapid Response Teams to both communities to begin helping workers prepare for the announced closures.

According to Domtar, the company will idle its pulp facility in May for an indefinite period of time. RR Donnelley announced Wednesday that it plans to stop operations in June.

"It's never good news when we hear that a company is going out of business," Governor Baldacci said. "But we will use the time between now and the actual closures to mitigate the impact on communities and on workers and their families."

Governor Baldacci has spoken with company officials from Domtar and held a meeting with members of Washington County's legislative delegation this morning. In addition, he also has spoken with town and county leaders about the situation.

"The most important thing is for the workers to know that they are not going through this alone and that all of us are working together on next steps," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci and Pelletier will visit Baileyville next week with a team of state officials. Fortman will also visit Wells next week to continue recovery efforts, and the Governor will be reaching out to local and legislative leaders from York County. Planning is underway for a gubernatorial visit to Wells.

On Wednesday, Governor Baldacci released the details of a three-year, $306 million investment strategy that will create jobs and expand educational opportunities for Mainers.

"More than ever, the loss of these jobs reminds us all that we must aggressively invest in our people and our economy," Governor Baldacci said. "We must do everything we can to create jobs and promote economic recovery."

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Governor Announces Nominations

March 5, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced appointments to the Maine Turnpike Authority and Land for Maine's Future boards.

Diane Doyle, of Saco, is being appointed to the Maine Turnpike Authority Board. Doyle owns and serves as president of the development and homebuilding company Doyle Enterprises. Doyle has served on the Saco Comprehensive Planning Committee and a variety of other community and professional organizations. She is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University.

Donald Marean is being appointed to the Land for Maine's Future Board. Prior to his retirement, Marean owned and operated Standish Hardware. Marean served two terms in the Maine House of Representatives (from 2005 to 2008). He has served as director and president of Maine Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association and has served on the Standish Planning Board. Marean is a resident of Hollis.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Transportation Committee and the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee respectively and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor Proclaims March as American Red Cross Month

March 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored those who contribute to the Maine chapter of the American Red Cross today during a ceremony in the Hall of Flags in Augusta. The Governor thanked the donors, volunteers and staff of the Red Cross, and proclaimed the month of March 2009 as American Red Cross Month throughout the State of Maine.

"The work of the Red Cross is appreciated by not only the families you are serving, but by every community throughout the State of Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "When we have disasters in this State, it is always the American Red Cross there setting up shop, providing help, support and warming shelters, conducting blood drives and making sure that hospitals and health care providers have the resources they need."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, every day, American Red Cross volunteers and employees carry out their mission by providing essential services to people in their communities with the help of generous donors across Maine; and

WHEREAS, for more than 90 years, the American Red Cross has provided disaster relief to the people of Maine, responding to an estimated 325 disasters, serving the needs of 380 families annually; and

WHEREAS, over the past year, more than 46,000 people have enrolled in American Red Cross Health and Safety Courses in Maine, preparing for disasters through first aid and CPR training, water safety training, and learning how to use automated external defibrillators; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross of Maine services more than 37 hospitals and transfusion centers around the State and serves as the bridge between more than 72,000 generous blood donors and millions of patients in need each year; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross is entrusted with providing volunteer aid in time of war to the sick and wounded of the Armed Forces by deploying staff members to provide emergency communications and a caring presence; and

WHEREAS, without the help of 4,400 tireless volunteers and employees, the American Red Cross of Maine would not be able to fulfill the humanitarian mission that is the cornerstone of the organization,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of March, 2009 as

AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Enhanced Recovery Act Web Site

March 6, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today unveiled an improved version of the State Web page dedicated to the federal Recovery Act. Through the enhanced site, http://www.mainerecovery.gov/ Mainers can access up-to-date information about where and how federal recovery funds are dispersed.

"Maine people expect and deserve access on the impact of the Recovery Act," said Governor Baldacci. "This improved Web page provides clear information about how the funds will be spent in a user-friendly format."

The original Web page was launched on Feb. 4 as a clearinghouse of information and resources for tracking the federal Recovery Act's progress in Congress and actions taken by State government related to the Recovery Act.

The updated site currently offers:

• A graphical interface displaying allocation of funding in several categories for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act;

• Information about state programs that will receive funding through the federal stimulus law;

• Additional resources for the public regarding stimulus allocation and expenditures; and

• Easy access to agency-specific stimulus Web pages and current stimulus data.

The public may offer comments and feedback through the site related to Maine's recovery spending and the effectiveness of the MaineRecovery.gov Web site.

"This Web site brings accountability and information to the public in an unprecedented fashion for the State of Maine," said Richard Thompson, Maine's Chief Information Officer. "The site released today is only the beginning of this effort. Information will be updated frequently and more detailed data will be available on the site soon. Online services of this nature deliver on the State's commitment to using the Web to deliver information more efficiently, while having a significant public impact and making government more accessible."

Site visitors eventually will be able to view dynamic information about any project funded by stimulus funds, including total dollars allocated and spent, location, percent complete, and contract and payment details. Users will be able to search by category, agency, and other criteria, and will be able to export resulting data into various report formats.

The new Web site is being developed under the direction of Governor John Baldacci, Ryan Low, Commissioner of The Department of Administrative & Financial Services (DAFS), and Richard Thompson, Chief Information Officer, in partnership with InforME, the state's e-government portal provider.

About Maine.gov

Maine.gov is the official Web portal of the state of Maine (http://www.Maine.gov) and a seven-time winner in the Center for Digital Government's Best of the Web competition. Maine.gov is a service of the Information Resource of Maine (InforME), a collaborative effort between the State of Maine and Maine Information Network, LLC that helps Maine's governmental entities provide information and services electronically. Maine.gov was built and is operated, maintained and marketed by Maine Information Network, a wholly owned subsidiary of eGovernment firm NIC (NASDAQ: EGOV).

About NIC

NIC is nation's leading provider of official government portals, online services, and secure payment processing solutions. The company's innovative eGovernment services help reduce costs and increase efficiencies for government agencies, citizens, and businesses across the country. NIC provides eGovernment solutions for 2,900 federal, state, and local agencies that serve more than 70 million people in the United States. Additional information is available at http://www.nicusa.com./

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Governor Meets with Officials in Wells to Discuss Impact of Closure of RR Donnelley

March 6, 2009

WELLS – Governor John E. Baldacci today met with officials in the Town of Wells to discuss the impact of the planned closure of RR Donnelley. The printing plant announced on Wednesday that it plans to close its Wells facility in June, affecting 370 workers.

"We are here for the workers, here for the families and here for the community," Governor Baldacci said. "This will have a huge impact for the region and for the State. Acting Town Manager Mike Houston and other officials in the area are already thinking about what else can be done. It gives you a great sense of confidence that people are looking forward and not dwelling on the past."

The Governor was joined at the meeting by Department of Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman, Sen. Richard Nass (R-York), Rep. Kathleen Chase (R-Wells), Rep. Dawn Hill (D-York), Wells Acting Town Manager Mike Houston, York County Community College President Dr. Charles Lyons and other town officials.

The Governor said that officials from the Department of Labor will be in town on March 10 to begin Rapid Response sessions. He spoke of resources available to workers, including continuing health insurance coverage through COBRA. Additionally, York County Community College will offer one free class to workers who have been laid off.

"First and foremost, the biggest concern is taking care of the workers who will be impacted," the Governor said. "This is a difficult time in terms of the deep recession we are experiencing. But we are Mainers. We are resilient and strong, and we will get through this."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Meets with Domtar Management, Union Leaders and Local Officials Regarding Future of Baileyville Mill

March 9, 2009

BAILEYVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in a series of meetings regarding the announced indefinite shutdown of the Domtar mill in Baileyville. The Governor met with Domtar management, union leaders and mill workers, members of the Baileyville Town Council, officials from the Town of Calais and members of the Washington County Legislative Delegation.

"Our main concern is the people," Governor Baldacci said. "We need to make sure the workers and their families are taken care of. We will continue to work with the company and hope to get this facility started again as soon as possible."

Governor Baldacci said that the State would be helping the community get through the shutdown by working with the company, and exploring additional possibilities for the mill. He said that the facility, the equipment and the workforce are great assets for Domtar and there are a lot of possibilities at the site.

"This is some of the most difficult news that you could hear in Washington County because of the impact this shutdown will have not only here, but throughout eastern Maine," the Governor said. "It's not just the workers at this facility, but the truckers, the loggers, the bankers and the restaurant workers – the ripple impacts will make it worse."

The Governor said that a rapid response team will be in Baileyville to meet with mill officials Thursday afternoon. The purpose of the meeting will be to set up meetings with workers to assist with unemployment claims, health care coverage and benefits. Because the Domtar shutdown is indefinite, the benefits for workers will differ from those received by workers at a facility experiencing a permanent shutdown.

Several ideas were presented to the Governor throughout the three meetings, including investing in the return of rail access at the Port of Eastport, putting a stronger focus on energy production at the mill, and diversification of jobs in Washington County.

Governor Baldacci told people at the meetings that times are difficult, but that everyone will work together to do what is in the best interest of the people of Washington County and eastern Maine.

"What we have here are opportunities," Governor Baldacci said. "You have high quality, productive people who just need a little support right now. We are in challenging times globally, but this facility has the right people and resources. Pulling together we will do everything we can to get through this tough time."

Following the meetings, Governor Baldacci visited Woodland High School in Baileyville to congratulate the school on winning the boys and girls Class D State Basketball titles. It was the fifth State championship for the girls team and the first State championship for the boys team in the school's history.

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Governor Delivers State of the State Address

March 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci delivered his annual State of the State Address this evening before a Joint Session of the 124th Maine Legislature.

In his speech, the Governor outlined his vision for building Maine's economic foundation during this difficult global recession. He noted that Maine's strengths, especially its people and natural resources, put the State in a unique position in this time in history. Opportunities exist within the areas of energy, health care and education, if the right investments are made now. Building off of the federal Recovery Act, these investments will create jobs and strengthen our economy.

The Governor highlighted a number of initiatives.

Energy – Aggressive plan to weatherize all Maine homes and half of Maine businesses in 20 years and put a Weatherization Corps of young workers in place this summer to work on energy rated projects. Invest in diverse, renewable energy resources to build our portfolio of clean, renewable energy. Improve Maine's electrical grid and transmission corridors to better link Maine to New Brunswick and New England.

Health Care – Establish a Universal Wellness program and create a pilot program based on patient-centered primary care delivery. With State and Federal matching dollars, provide more than $370 million new dollars to Maine's hospitals. Enhance ability for unemployed workers to temporarily access more affordable health insurance. Use Recovery funds to help launch two medical schools, one partnered with Maine Medical Center and one with Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Education - Expand laptop program so that youth in grades 7 through 12 have laptops in school. The laptops will be loaded with software to connect Maine families with the State's CareerCenters, making the laptops a tool for the entire family. Advance a joint University of Maine and Southern Maine Community College center for advanced technology and engineering campus at Brunswick Naval Air Station.

The Governor also reiterated the necessity for the bond package that he unveiled last week. Examples of critical investments include the engineering campus, energy independence, clean water, Land for Maine's Future and improvements in infrastructure. Governor Baldacci said that the time is right to make investments that will build on the federal Recovery Act and help Maine create jobs while laying a solid foundation for economic growth.

The text of the State of the State is attached.

State of the State

Governor John Elias Baldacci

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

7 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Madam President, Madam Speaker, Madam Chief Justice, members of the Legislature, members of the Cabinet, distinguished guests and my fellow citizens:

Thank you for joining me tonight as we come together to take measure of our State.

We face economic perils that will test our courage, our creativity and our resolve.

We will all be called upon to make uncomfortable decisions, to do without and to do things differently.

The headlines are filled with the terrible realities of the global recession.

Yesterday, I visited Baileyville in Washington County.

The community received rough news just last week. The Domtar pulp mill will be indefinitely shutting down in May. More than 300 people could lose their jobs.

The announcement came one day after RR Donnelley in Wells announced it would close its doors in June. More than 370 jobs will be lost. Unemployment is rising. Confidence has been shaken.

As I talk with the good men and women of Maine, I hear a similar question, punctuated with fear and uncertainty.

People ask: Governor, is the sun rising or is the sun setting? Has our time passed, will our children struggle in the years to come?

I do not know how long this recession will last, or how deep it will go.

But the sun will rise on Maine, and Maine will raise herself for the United States of America.

On Thursday when the news of the Domtar closure was released, I met with Legislators from Washington County, and we called County Commissioner Chris Gardner, who is also the director of the Port of Eastport.

It was a tough day all around.

But as we talked, Chris said something we all should take to heart. He said: "This is bad news, and we have a lot of things we must do in the coming days to prepare our community. But we also have to get started reinventing ourselves. We have opportunities."

That is the spirit of Maine.

We are all aware of the challenges we face. But we can adapt. We can make the necessary changes.

In 1933, a newly elected Governor of Maine, Louis J. Brann, addressed the hardships of the Great Depression.

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He said: "Giant forces are changing the entire social, political and governmental set-up of the world."

"What was clear and accepted becomes complex and bewildering."

"We find ourselves squarely up against conditions, new in government, calling for clear thinking and wise action …

"We may be forced to part with some things that we have grown to like," Governor Brann continued.

"Like one going on a long journey, we must pack only the essentials. We will have to 'travel light.' Today, my friends of this Legislature, the State of Maine marches along the high road of stern necessity."

Now, 76 years later, our predicament demands that same clear thinking and wise action as we work to ward off a global recession. And like 1933, we must make the right choices if we are to once again prosper.

In just a few short weeks, this Legislature worked with my administration to close a $140 million dollar budget gap for the current year.

State revenues dropped because the economy is dropping. To balance the books, Democrats and Republicans worked together with little regard for partisanship.

The steps we took to close the budget gap were tough, but the Appropriations Committee built a unanimous plan that won broad, bipartisan support.

We packed a light bag for the rest of this year.

Now we must move on to the budget for the next two years, and we can only afford to pack the essentials for that trip.

The Legislature has just finished public hearings on the budget I submitted in January.

My $6.1 billion dollar plan reduces State spending by about $200 million dollars. It's the first time since at least 1974 that the State budget will actually be smaller than its predecessor.

This budget is prudent, and the reductions are necessary.

My plan protects our safety net, while calling on everyone in the State to adopt a sense of shared sacrifice.

We all must do our part to get through this difficult time.

The symptoms of today's economic crisis are not unique to Maine, although we can surely feel them.

Our country – the entire world – is struggling under the weight of the same burdens.

But our strengths are undeniable, and we will not be deterred.

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It may be dark right now, but we are not lost in the night.

We are not afraid of shadows or the empty noises that haunt children's dreams.

The dawn of a new economic day in Maine is not here yet. But it is coming. We know the direction to look.

Because the sun rises first in Maine.

We have a plan.

There is a path to take. We know what we must do.

Just three short weeks ago the President signed an unprecedented economic recovery plan into law.

This much needed federal support will send about $900 million new dollars to Maine, to build roads, repair bridges, to help people stay well and to create jobs.

We have already started putting that money to work, and combined with our existing highway plan for this spring, summer and fall, we will put 11,000 people on the job in our State just in the area of transportation.

Thousands more jobs will be preserved at our schools, in our hospitals and as we advance toward new innovations and energy independence.

Without the hard work of Rep. Mike Michaud and Rep. Chellie Pingree, and the courage of Sen. Olympia Snowe and Sen. Susan Collins, this great opportunity for reinvestment would have been lost.

I spoke with Sen. Snowe and Sen. Collins during the most difficult hours of negotiations. They put aside empty partisanship and stood up for Maine and the nation.

With a new federal wind at our back, we have an unmatched opportunity to transform our State.

Last week, I proposed a three-year, $306 million dollar investment that will create jobs and strengthen our economy.

My plan makes critical investments in energy independence, highways and bridges.

It further develops passenger and freight rail, and invests in clean water and healthy communities.

And it will build our intellectual capacity by supporting higher education and innovation.

In addition, the plan will leverage more than $380 million dollars from other sources, putting nearly $700 million new dollars to work in Maine.

I understand that folks are nervous and that some might question the wisdom of borrowing right now, even for worthy projects.

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Our State has always been conservative with bonds. We don't borrow more than we can afford, and we don't extend ourselves beyond good sense. We pay our bonds back in just 10 years, while most take 20 years or longer.

That makes now the time to invest.

There is no excuse for inaction.

We need to put people to work and help them gain the skills to be successful.

Maine has been a leader in putting technology to work in the classroom. We are going to revamp our laptop program and turn it into a powerful tool for the entire family.

The Department of Education and the Department of Labor will work to make sure every one of those computers has software preloaded to connect Maine families with the services available at our State's CareerCenters.

Every night when students in seventh through 12th-grade bring those computers home, they'll connect the whole family to new opportunities and new resources.

Just as the path forward requires us to make smart investments, it also requires that we break the bad habits of the past.

We cannot afford to back-track on important reforms that have driven government at all levels to be more efficient.

Change is always difficult, and it's easy to understand why some find comfort in the status quo.

But business as usual doesn't work anymore.

We must continue forward with the reform of K-12 administration. We can not allow Maine to be dragged backwards by a referendum that seeks a return to the expensive past.

The way forward – the way to protect local schools and resources for the classroom – is to stop wasting money on unnecessary bureaucracies and administrations.

We must continue to push for more effective and efficient government here in Augusta, in our counties, and at town and city halls across the State.

An excellent example is our new Board of Corrections, which is for the first time coordinating the work of 15 county jails and the state prisons.

It's been hard work, with a few bumps along the way, but we see progress every day. I am confident the Board will make our corrections system more affordable, while providing better results for communities and our people.

And we know there are more savings to be had by keeping our eyes on efficiency.

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This summer, I asked the internationally respected business consulting group, McKinsey and Company, for a data-driven evaluation of our State.

We learned that Maine can save at least $180 million more dollars over three years by improving the way we do business.

How do we do it?

We must be willing to reform now.

Whether it's by combining State agencies, eliminating unnecessary regulations, or holding the line on taxes, we must maintain our fiscal vigilance and question the way every tax dollar is spent.

Today, Maine's government is smaller and more effective than at any time in recent memory. Since 2002, the number of State workers has been cut by more than 700 as we have learned to do more with less. That is a stern necessity we face.

But smaller government doesn't mean we settle for less effective government.

Let me give you an example. In Child Welfare, we have worked with families, schools and communities to reduce the number of children in foster care by one-third and to double the percentage of children placed with relatives and families.

Government gets smaller, and children are healthier and happier. Creative partnerships also give us the opportunity to stretch limited resources.

This year, Fairpoint Communications joined Maine's business community.

Gene Johnson, the company's president, brought with him to Maine a commitment to our State, to expand broadband statewide and to help us grow our economy. So far, the company has added more than 440 workers to its payroll in Maine.

Now the company will join with the State to form a new partnership that will help to refocus our economic development activities.

Simply put, we too often react to the crisis of the day instead of preparing and executing a comprehensive development strategy.

Our approach will help regions identify their best assets and develop plans to build upon them.

It's economic development from the ground up, instead of the top down.

And we will combine economic development with Quality of Place. Quality of Place is shorthand for those things that we all treasure, that make Maine special, that keep us all coming home and draw visitors from around the world.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

It's our coastline, still dotted with working waterfronts. Our clean, deep lakes and fresh air. It's our vast and healthy forests. We have artificially separated economic development from the characteristics of our State that make it so attractive in the first place.

Occasionally, we've allowed an unnecessary competition to grow between economic development and Quality of Place.

But they don't compete; they must be tied together to be successful. That's why I propose that we will continue to invest money to preserve Maine's unique heritage by continuing the Land for Maine's Future and Working Waterfront programs.

This will help to preserve open access to some of our most scenic areas, help farmers and fishermen stay on the job, and safeguard our forests and protect our forest products industry with a sustainable fiber supply.

Maine is a special place, and we need to protect it.

Even before health care money from the Recovery Act began to come to Maine, I worked with the Legislature to set out clear rules for how the money could be used.

First and foremost, we must balance our budget and take care of the people who need our help the most.

Second, we will meet our obligations to Maine hospitals. In 2006, I signed a commitment to the hospitals that Maine would pay down its debt. With State and Federal matching dollars, we will provide more than $370 million new dollars to Maine's hospitals this year.

This money will save jobs and make sure that important health programs, especially in rural communities, continue.

There are 39 hospitals in Maine, employing more than 22,000 people from Fort Kent to Kittery and everywhere in between. They do a great job, and this will make them stronger.

Maine has been a national leader in providing health care coverage for our people. We have been committed to making health care more affordable and expanding access.

We have had success, and our rate of uninsured ranks among the best five states in the country.

Yet, a terrible side effect of rising unemployment is that more and more people are losing their health insurance because it was provided by their employer.

Just when folks need health care security the most, they see it slip away.

As part of his Recovery Act, the President has included provisions that make insurance more affordable for people who lose coverage when they lose their job.

Unfortunately, for too many people even the new expanded option falls short.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

In the coming days, I will submit a proposal using Recovery funds that will create a voucher system for newly unemployed workers who need additional help keeping their health insurance.

The vouchers will help the newly unemployed buy private health insurance or help them enroll in a temporary, affordable health plan.

The program will be limited and last only as long as the federal program it's meant to complement.

It's a one-time program, using one-time money.

As Washington works on national health care reform, we will continue to blaze a trail here in Maine.

Good health takes more than an insurance card. It requires all of us to be as healthy as we can be – preventing diseases that drive up our health care costs.

Health care premiums are growing four times faster than wages. The costs are straining family and business budgets.

Chronic illness, like diabetes, asthma, heart and lung diseases, account for about 30 percent of premium costs or about $350 million dollars a year in Maine.

That's spending on poor health that in most cases is preventable. Tonight, I am announcing Maine's Universal Wellness program. It will help every Mainer know, understand and take action to reduce health risks and prevent disease. And it does it within existing resources.

Beginning in July, our statewide system of Healthy Maine Partnerships will offer free, confidential risk reviews and link people to local resources that can help them improve their health and prevent disease.

This is a long-term strategy that arms Mainers with the information they need to be healthier.

We also know that good health requires having enough high quality doctors and health care providers available when you need them. Doctors and nurses are the lifeblood of good health, and Maine doesn't have enough of them.

I propose using $3.5 million dollars in one-time Recovery funds to help launch two innovative medical schools that will train the doctors we need in Maine.

Tufts University will partner with Maine Medical Center; And the University of Vermont will partner with Eastern Maine Medical Center and the University of Maine to create medical schools in our State, so doctors can finish their training right here.

We aren't building new buildings.

Instead, we will provide needed scholarships for Maine residents to support their medical education at Maine Medical Center, Eastern Maine Medical Center or the University of New England.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Research shows that doctors tend to settle near the hospitals where they complete their training. And I know that given the chance young doctors will stay in Maine.

Finally, we will work with Maine's medical community to change the way we provide primary health care.

Today, patients and doctors are overbooked into crazy schedules where they might get as little as 10 minutes together during an office visit. Our current system pays for sickness, not for keeping people well.

It doesn't make any sense.

That's why I propose using $500,000 dollars of Recovery funds for a pilot project designed to change the way we deliver primary care.

We will test a system with 15 medical practices that allows teams of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to concentrate on keeping you well – not just waiting for you to get sick.

They'll work to keep you at home and out of the hospital.

We have an opportunity to transform health care in Maine, and make it more affordable and more patient-centered.

That's a goal we all share.

For nearly 30 years, I have been involved in public service, for the last six years as Governor. During that time, I have had the privilege to work with many dedicated people.

But I have never known a stronger advocate for Maine's children than the First Lady.

Karen has elevated the efforts of Maine Reads, created the Festival of the Book, and has been instrumental in bringing the first-in-New-England Educare Center to Waterville, which will break ground in June and help establish best practices for early childhood teaching.

She is tireless, and an inspiration, who keeps us all grounded in what's most important.

Karen is here tonight with our son, Jack.

Could you both stand and receive the greetings of the Chamber?

This summer, we received an unwelcome reminder of how dependent our State is on costly, imported oil.

In a short time, prices more than doubled for gasoline, diesel and heating oil.

We were on the verge of a crisis.

Truckers, fishermen and just about everyone else felt the weight of high energy costs.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

We immediately began planning for an emergency. We knew then, and we know now, that if heating oil prices are $4 dollars and 50 cents a gallon, many people would struggle just to make it through Maine's long winter.

There are many factors that have contributed to the current recession.

Poor decisions on Wall Street and in Washington; an economy dependent on easy credit; and a lack of government oversight all played a part.

But the high cost of energy is one of the biggest factors.

I'm concerned that we might forget the role high oil prices played in our current economic troubles and underestimate how quickly prices can rise again.

We've been through energy crunches before.

But time and time again, as prices stabilized we returned to our old habits.

Not this time.

Not again.

No more.

For too long our economy has been held hostage by imported, foreign oil.

It's jeopardized our national security, and has left us at the mercy of markets and foreign powers over which we have little control.

In July, we took immediate action to begin fighting our oil addiction, with a new emphasis on making homes more energy efficient.

We increased funding for weatherization, cutting the energy bill for families.

We put technology to work, streaming live video to classrooms across the State, so we could expand training for homeowners and professionals so they can get the information they need to reduce energy consumption.

We put all of our energy resources within reach of a single telephone call. One call to 2-1-1 will put you in touch with a person who can help.

We distributed more than 300,000 do-it-yourself brochures that include easy-to-do tips to reduce energy consumption.

And you raised more than $1 million dollars through the Keep Maine Warm Fund to help folks make it through the heating season.

Thank you to those who gave.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Much has been accomplished, but we must do more. Prices will go back up, and we can't sit and wait for it to happen.

We must transform our State.

We will become more energy efficient;

We will invest in clean, renewable sources of power;

We will build a better electric grid that is more reliable and capable of connecting Maine and all of the Northeast to new sources of electricity;

We will empower workers to do the high-tech green jobs that our new economy will demand.

And we will invest in a smarter transportation system that can move goods and people more cheaply and efficiently.

Our efforts start with energy conservation and weatherization, where we've already made a good start.

We will leverage funding from the President's Recovery Act, and we'll expand the reach of our efforts.

I will introduce the Maine Energy Independence Act, which will re-invent the way we manage our State energy programs, and put all of our efforts under one roof so they are more closely coordinated and integrated.

We will set aggressive goals to weatherize every home in Maine and half of all of our businesses in the next 20 years.

We know that we need to make energy upgrades as easy as possible.

With this plan, there will be one place that individuals, families and businesses can go to get help with all of their energy efficiency needs.

My approach will build upon the strengths of our current programs, but will also energize new partnerships to accomplish our goals.

Tonight I am announcing a new collaboration between the State and Maine banks and credit unions that will simplify the way people accomplish home energy improvements.

The program uses State loan guarantees to access up to $100 million dollars of private capital.

It will help thaw our frozen credit market and make it possible for homeowners to invest in energy upgrades.

In one simple process, you'll be able to save money on your mortgage by refinancing, improve your home's value, and cut utility bills.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

And we'll provide direct support, through our State Energy Plan, for subsidized energy audits and other incentives to help businesses make improvements.

The Recovery Act includes $32 million dollars to weatherize homes for low-income families, and we're adding access to another $100 million for middle-class families.

We'll multiply our current weatherization efforts by 20 times.

I'm talking about a massive infusion of new resources to fix people's homes and improve their lives.

The dividends for Maine are huge. We'll send fewer energy dollars out of State, we'll reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and we'll create thousands of jobs for Maine workers.

In addition to creating new jobs, we must ensure that Maine workers are prepared to fill them.

We will combine the efforts of the Department of Labor, Maine State Housing, the Public Utilities Commission and our universities and community colleges to create a green-collar workforce that is second to none.

This summer Maine will have its own Weatherization Corps of young workers, who will learn important life and job skills right on the job.

A joint program between the Department of Labor, Jobs for Maine Graduates, local CAP agencies and Maine Housing will train about 100 students to work on energy related projects.

These young people will have the opportunity to learn about energy efficiency and home weatherization while working to make their State a better place to live. And they'll do it while earning a paycheck.

It's a good program that will help young workers and help us meet our energy goals.

My energy plan also invests in the growth of Maine-based renewable energy resources.

When Maine was at the peak of its economic strength, our industries were able to harness the power of our rivers and the resources in our forests to produce cheap electricity.

Those resources drove Maine's industrial revolution. And those same renewable resources can power a new revolution for our State.

Already, we have reduced the regulatory barriers for the development of onshore wind power, and we have an Ocean Energy Task Force working right now to do the same thing for resources that exist off our coast.

The group is developing legislation that will greatly advance renewable energy projects off the coast of Maine.

And I propose $7.5 million dollars for a Maine Marine Wind Energy Fund that will support the development of the premier offshore testing site for wind energy for the country.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

This is a tremendous opportunity to become one of only three test sites in the country.

Success will make Maine a hub for the manufacturing and research industries that will drive energy production for the next generation.

We don't have oil or natural gas reserves in Maine, but we are rich in the resources that can take their place. We have two of the largest operating wind farms in New England, and billions of dollars in proposed projects on the way.

Turbines placed off Maine's coast have the potential to produce more than 133 gigawatts of electricity from wind alone. That's as much electricity as 40 nuclear power plants can produce.

There's also impressive work happening in the development of tidal power, which captures the movement of the ocean to generate electricity. Ocean Renewable Power Company is field testing tidal power turbines right now near Eastport.

And that's just the beginning. As my Wood-to-Energy Task Force demonstrated, Maine has great energy reserves in our forests.

Whether it's through wood pellets in homes and businesses or biomass electric generation, we have great options for diversifying our energy consumption.

SAD 58 Superintendent Quentin Clark has put this type of innovative thinking to work in his school system. Instead of relying on oil from 8,000 miles away, he is heating one school with pellets made in Franklin County, just eight miles away. He's looking to expand the program to all the schools in his district.

And a facility in Strong will provide the pellets.

Quentin is creating opportunities by being smart about energy.

Solar, hydroelectric and the potential for pumped storage round out our impressive energy mix.

Maine sits at the center of a growing energy hub, not only for us but for all of New England.

To the north in Canada, there are vast sources of clean, cheap and renewable energy. To the south, millions of people hungry for renewable, clean, reliable energy supplies.

As anyone in real estate can tell you, the three most important assets you can have are location, location and location.

Our location puts us in a position to become a renewable energy engine for our country. We can help deliver on the promise of a new energy future – one that reduces the impact on our climate, and stabilizes and reduces the cost of electricity for Maine.

But if we want to capitalize on our advantages, we must be aggressive.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

As we transition our economy from oil and utilize more electricity for our energy needs, we must strengthen and improve our electrical grid.

That means more reliable transmission and greater capacity to handle the new energy resources that are being developed.

Consider the Maine Power Reliability Project, proposed by Central Maine Power. This upgrade of our existing grid has the potential to pump $1.5 billion dollars into our State's economy and create more than 2,000 jobs over four years.

That translates into more than $240 million dollars in new wages and salaries.

In addition, we need to connect Aroostook County's electric grid to the rest of Maine and New England. We can't continue with part of our State isolated from the rest.

And while we need to be able to move quickly to review new projects when they are proposed, that doesn't mean relaxing our standards.

Every project must be judged on its details and must be right for Maine.

But we must move forward.

We also must rethink the assets we have, and put them to the most efficient use.

Right now in Maine, we have transportation corridors that run the length of our State.

We need to transform them into much more.

Today I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bangor Hydro to explore the potential use of the right-of-way that exists along our interstates and roads for new, underground transmission lines.

Instead of a transmission company negotiating with hundreds of individual landowners and communities, they can utilize right-of-ways that already exist. There's less impact on the environment and less impact on people.

Transportation corridors will become commerce corridors.

The idea also has the potential to speed an exciting proposal currently under consideration.

Bangor Hydro's Northeast Energy Link, which would run from Orrington to Boston, has the potential to inject $2 billion dollars into Maine for the construction of a new transmission line that would move eleven hundred megawatts of clean, renewable electricity.

The line would support the growth of vast wind resources and help to drive down the prices for electricity in Maine and throughout the region.

We are also investigating the potential for second energy corridor that would run between Maine and New Brunswick.

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Our shared objective with New Brunswick is to increase the long-term supply of secure, reliable and clean energy to our region. The work will also include the accelerated development of renewable power and an improved grid in Maine.

These commerce corridors would house appropriate projects, generating tens of millions of dollars each year in new revenue for the State.

Those resources would be used to meet our weatherization and energy efficiency goals, to invest in top quality energy research and other State priorities, including tax relief.

And the corridors would make it quicker and easier for major projects to get started, putting people to work faster.

A third possible transmission line is being discussed at part of the plans for pump storage in Wiscasset.

Riverbank Power wants to spend about $1 billion dollar to construct an underground hydro generation facility in Wiscasset.

The facility would then be connected to Boston by a proposed $1 billion dollar underwater transmission line.

With just a small handful of projects, Maine has the potential to benefit from more than $5 billion dollars of direct, private-sector investment.

And if we meet our stated goal of developing 3,000 megawatts of wind power, Maine will see an additional $7.5 billion dollars of energy investment.

The massive size of the proposed investments – at least $12 billion dollars and growing – demonstrates Maine's central position in the growth of renewable energy, and our great potential for energy self-sufficiency and to lower energy prices for Maine people and businesses.

At stake are thousands of jobs, new economic development, and millions of dollars of potential revenues for the State that can support our priorities.

When it comes to energy, Maine and New Brunswick have a close and necessary relationship. We have to work together, and that means making compromises for our better energy future on both sides of the border.

As we move forward with new and exciting energy partnerships, it is critical that the Canadian government support our efforts to bring new, liquefied natural gas terminals to Washington County.

LNG has an important role to play as Maine transitions from oil to renewables, and the proposed terminals in Washington County give economic hope to a region that needs new industry.

All of these projects will create thousands of good-paying, private-sector jobs in Maine just when we need them the most.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

To capitalize on these new jobs and to build the industries of the 21st Century, Maine must invest in education, innovation, and research and development.

A generation ago, a high school diploma opened the door to a good job that could last a lifetime. That's not true anymore. Success today depends on a college education.

That's why I propose significant investments in Maine's institutions of higher learning so they can serve more students and make energy efficient improvements that will save money that can be put toward the classroom.

That's why I propose an advanced technology and engineering campus as part of our redevelopment plans for Brunswick Naval Air Station.

The center will bring together the University of Maine and Southern Maine Community College in a joint venture that will support the economic development of the Midcoast while also training students for the good jobs of the future.

This collaboration between the university and community college should be a model for greater cooperation between our institutions of higher learning.

We need to break down the walls that separate the systems and instead build bridges for greater efficiencies.

There's great potential for working together and saving money. And that means more resources for students and teachers.

Tonight as we examine the State of our State, I want to take a few moments to thank the men and women of the Maine National Guard, who every day make us proud, whether it's serving in Iraq or Afghanistan or responding to an emergency right here at home.

Right now, we have 15 members of the Guard serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds more preparing for deployment later this month and early next year.

All of these brave men and women are close to our hearts even when they are many miles from home.

We pray for their safety, and offer our sincere gratitude for their service.

In closing, I would like to return to Governor Brann, who served our State during the worst of economic times.

He said: "Maine women and Maine men have never faltered in the crisis. The ruggedness and stern grandeur of our land are reflected in the character of our people. The future of Maine has always been safe in the hands of its sons and daughters, and never more so than today."

Now in 2009, we have within reach the power to shape our own future, to write the next chapter in this Great State's story.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

When our grandchildren and their children look back, I want them to see in us a generation that answered the call, that transformed Maine.

Our way forward is not just about energy. Or a cleaner environment, or even the jobs we'll create today, although all those things are important.

What I'm talking about is a new economy, one that's built to succeed in a rapidly changing world. But it's an economy that will rely upon those same Maine traits that have served us so well: Honesty, Integrity, Quality, Pride and Workmanship. Maine Built is Best Built.

There's a new era of opportunity and prosperity on the horizon. We will get there together.

Thank you.

Good night.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Taps Maple Tree at Blaine House

March 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in the annual maple tree tapping at the Blaine House to promote Maine maple syrup. The Governor was joined by Lyle Merrifield of Merrifield Farms in Gorham, President of the Maine Maple Producers Association.

"Maple syrup production is a natural resource based industry rooted in the cultural traditions of the State, originating with Native Americans," said Governor Baldacci. "Licensed producers in Maine produced 215,000 gallons of syrup last year. This is a multi-million dollar industry for the State, with producers range from tapping only a few trees to many thousands."

Maine Maple Sunday is fast approaching. The event, held annually on the fourth Sunday of March, takes place March 22 this year. As part of this year's celebration of maple syrup production, more than 70 sugarhouses will be open around the State. Sugarhouses welcome visitors to participate in syrup and candy sampling, demonstrations of making syrup, sugarbush tours and a variety of other activities.

"This is a wonderful annual tradition and I wish all our maple syrup producers, those who use the syrup for candymaking, and all those who enjoy maple syrup products a successful season," said Governor Baldacci.

For information about participating sugarhouses, visit http://www.getrealmaine.com/

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Agreement Signed Formalizing Plan for Aroostook County Highway Projects

March 11, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the process by which specific transportation projects in Caribou and Presque Isle will be completed. The MOU was signed by the Governor, Maine Department of Transportation Commission David Cole and the managers of the cities of Caribou and Presque Isle.

Last Wednesday, the Governor conducted a meeting with the Aroostook County legislative delegation, Maine Department of Transportation, and town officials and civic leaders from Houlton, Fort Kent, Caribou and Presque Isle. The Governor sought an agreement to advance pieces of the Aroostook County Transportation Study.

As a result of the agreement, the previously tied Caribou Connector and Presque Isle Bypass Segments are now stand-alone projects. The Caribou project is moving forward, with construction beginning in 2010. The Presque Isle project will continue, but on a different timeline.

The Governor had directed the Maine Department of Transportation to draw up an agreement between parties to formalize the consensus reached last Wednesday.

Under the agreement, MaineDOT will expedite the construction of the Caribou Connector in the 2010 construction season utilizing existing resources obtained by the State's Congressional Delegation. The two segments within the Caribou Connector are estimated to cost $20 million.

MaineDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) received an alignment approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Sept. 18, 2008, regarding the Caribou segment, but are still awaiting a similar approval from the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Presque Isle Bypass Segment. The work on the Presque Isle Segment will continue unabated, and the planning work is expected to be complete by the 2011 construction season.

To accomplish this, MaineDOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration to separate the Caribou and Presque Isle projects in the current study. Current federal High Priority Project funding will be used for the Caribou project.

The Caribou Connector Alternative is available for viewing online in the following document on Page 4-7 and is identified as Alternative 4B:

http://www.vhb.com/aroostook/pdfs/Caribou-ConnectorPhaseIICompleteFINALwsignatureslowres.pdf

The text of the agreement signed by the Governor, Commissioner Cole and the city managers of Caribou and Presque Isle follows.

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Memorandum of Agreement Between the State of Maine Department of Transportation, City of Caribou and the City of Presque Isle Regarding the Aroostook County Transportation Study Proposed Caribou Connector Project

Whereas, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed the MaineDOT to advance an Aroostook County transportation project so that construction on the proposed Caribou Connector project can begin in 2010; and

Whereas, On September 18, 2008, MaineDOT and the Federal Highway Administration received an alignment approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Caribou Connector;

Now therefore, Governor John E. Baldacci, MaineDoT, the City of Caribou and the City of Presque Isle, agree to the following:

• All parties will support a Reevaluation Document to be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration that requests the separation of the Caribou and Presque Isle segment of the North-South Highway Study; and

• MaineDOT will expedite construction of the Caribou Connector in the 2010 construction season utilizing existing resources obtained by the State's Congressional Delegation; and

• work on the Presque Isle Segment will continue unabated, with the planning work expected to be complete by the 2011 construction season.

_____ _____ John E. Baldacci, Governor David Cole, Commissioner State of Maine Maine Department of Transportation

_____ _____ Steven Buck Thomas Stevens, City Manager City of Caribou City of Presque Isle¬

Signed March 6, 2009

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

State Makes Payment to Maine Hospitals

March 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a $45 million financial order to pay a portion of the State's obligation to Maine hospitals under an October 2006 settlement agreement. The Governor was joined in the Hall of Flags announcement by the Maine Hospital Association, bipartisan Legislative leadership and representatives from Maine's Congressional Delegation.

"Today is a good day for Maine hospitals and for our State," said the Governor. "We are fulfilling the promise of the Recovery Act by protecting jobs and protecting access to health care for our most vulnerable neighbors."

The financial order signed today enables the State to use $45 million of General Fund money made available by the federal Recovery Act. The money will draw down federal dollars for a total payment to hospitals of $163 million in State and Federal dollars. In addition, the Governor has submitted a proposal to the Legislature that includes an additional $57 million for hospital payments. The $57 million will draw down federal matching dollars for a total payment in 2010 of $210.7 million dollars.

All told, Maine's hospitals will receive payments in 2009 and 2010 toward old settlements totaling $373.7 million in Federal and State dollars.

"In October 2006, I committed to an aggressive four-year schedule to increase hospital reimbursements and repay Maine's hospitals for settlements owed to them," said Governor Baldacci. "Despite difficult budget times, working with the Legislature we have been able to meet that commitment. The agreement I signed in 2006 was to bring Maine current through fiscal year 2007. With these payments, we will go beyond what we agreed to."

As the Appropriations Committee worked to close the 2009 supplemental budget, a bipartisan agreement was reached that ensured that the first General Fund dollars freed up by increased federal support for Medicaid would be directed toward hospital settlements. At the time of the agreement, the amount that would be available was not known.

"I am proud of the balance that we have achieved by working together to meet our obligations to Maine's hospitals, especially our rural facilities," said the Governor. "At the same time, we have avoided painful cuts in human services. We know that this global recession will put increasing strains on our safety net."

The 2006 agreement also called on hospitals to work to control the cost of the health care they provide.

"In the agreement, both sides agreed to a target of 3 percent growth in hospital costs," said Governor Baldacci. "As important as these payments are, we also know that our current rate of health care spending is not sustainable. It will take a collaborative effort between the State, Maine's hospitals and other health care providers to contain costs while providing access to quality care."

"As we move forward, Maine will replace its current payment method, which involves interim payments followed later by settlements, with a system that is more accurate and more timely. But we will need everyone – my administration, the Legislature, the hospitals and other care providers – all working together to contain costs," said the Governor.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Kicks Off Maine Business Day at the State House

March 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today kicked off Maine Business Day at the State House. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce sponsors the event, which brings business leaders together with elected officials to discuss their struggles and successes over the past year.

"I want to recognize you for what you do every day to keep the Maine economic engine humming," Governor Baldacci said. "I know that times are tough. We are in the grips of an incredibly difficult global recession. But through the collaboration of the State Chamber to the partnerships fostered and growing in our communities, Maine businesses play an important role in Maine's economic recovery."

Governor Baldacci said that he remains positive about the future, even though he knows that people and businesses are struggling right now.

"As I said last week in my State of the State Address, I am optimistic that we will – working together – come out of this recession stronger than ever," the Governor said. "Maine's strengths, especially its people and natural resources, put us in a unique position. Opportunities exist, if the right investments are made now."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

ConnectME Authority Seeks Request for Proposals

March 18, 2009

Mapping and Inventory Project for Recovery Act Funding

AUGUSTA – The ConnectME Authority expects to apply for Recovery Act funds to further the Administration's goal of expanding broadband throughout Maine. Preparing for such an application, the Authority has recently released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a qualified independent contractor to develop a statewide comprehensive assessment of current broadband service and infrastructure deployment.

An update of broadband availability inventory in the State is an essential part of the ConnectME Authority's preparation for grant applications from the federal Recovery Act. The inventory will enable the Authority to focus State and federal funds where they are most needed.

Governor Baldacci, in conjunction with the Legislature, created the ConnectME initiative in 2006 to expand broadband throughout Maine. He said that improving broadband is essential to Maine's economy.

"These investments provide people in rural areas enhanced access to technology, transforming our state economy, and expanding business opportunities for more Mainers," said the Governor.

The mapping and assessment must incorporate all information that is necessary in order to satisfy various standards identified in the Broadband Data Improvement Act (PL 110-385), the Recovery Act, and subsequent rules and determinations of a number of federal agencies.

A copy of the RFP detailing specifications may be obtained by contacting Cheryl C. Winslow, (207) 624-9440, or by submitting a request in writing to Cheryl C. Winslow, Office of Information Technology, 26 Edison Drive, Statehouse Station # 145, Augusta, ME 04333-0145.

Responses are due no later than 2 p.m. on April 21, 2009.

For more information on the RFP and the ConnectME initiative, please go to http://www.maine.gov/connectme/index.shtml

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Resolve to Rename Augusta Bridge

March 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 60, Resolve, To Rename the Father Curran Bridge in Augusta. The bill renames the bridge as the Calumet Bridge at Old Fort Western. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Patsy Crockett (D-Augusta).

"Rep. Crockett worked hard with members of the community and this is taking a positive step toward healing for many," Governor Baldacci said. "With this legislation, we move forward with the renaming of the bridge. It will now be known as the Calumet Bridge at Old Fort Western, recognizing the wonderful contributions and heritage of our Franco-American roots and the important landmark that is Fort Western."

Governor Baldacci and Rep. Crockett were joined at the ceremonial signing by co-sponsors of the legislation, Augusta Mayor Roger Katz, members of the Augusta City Council, members of the Calumet Club and other supporters of the legislation.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Maine Festival of the Book to Celebrate Love of All Literary Genres

March 23, 2009

Maine's First Lady to chair literary extravaganza

PORTLAND – The third annual Maine Festival of the Book will take place in Portland, April 2-5, with a full day of programs Saturday, April 4, at the University of Southern Maine's Abromson Center. Programs are free and open to the public.

The festival is designed to appeal to readers with a range of interests and gives the public the chance to learn what goes on behind the scenes when producing a book. The festival is presented by the nonprofit Maine Reads, in collaboration with organizations statewide, and is chaired by First Lady Karen M. Baldacci.

"I am delighted that Maine Festival of the Book is now an annual tradition," said the First Lady. "While promoting literacy, we have the opportunity to bring members of Maine's literary community together in one place for a celebration of the written word."

More than 3,000 people attended Festivals 2007 and 2008, enjoying about 200 authors and performers.

The festival's goal is to encourage a dialogue between authors and readers. Most programs will feature two authors engaged in a discussion that captures an aspect of their writing; these subjects may include memoir, travel, biography, gardening, food, and nature. Question and answer periods, as well as book signings, follow.

"Programs at the festival have an emphasis on discussion," said Sarah Cecil, Executive Director of Maine Reads. "Usually each program features more than one author, creating a different dynamic than your typical reading. The variety of authors and subject matter is designed to inspire audiences with a range of tastes and interests."

At 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, in the Glickman Family Library at the University of Southern Maine, Richard Lindemann, Director of the George J. Mitchell Special Collections and Archives at Bowdoin College, will give a talk entitled The History of the Book: A Visual Chronology. The program is presented by the Kate Cheney Chappell '83 Center for Book Arts at USM.

On Friday, April 3, there will be the Opening Night party for festival sponsors and presenting authors. In addition, in collaboration with Urban Adventures, an outreach project of Jobs for Maine Grads and UNUM, Maine Reads will present a workshop with cartoonist/graphic novelist Jay Piscopo.

On Saturday, April 4, concurrent programs will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Abromson Center at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. Thematic discussions, some with Powerpoint illustrations, readings, book signings, and performances will be held. Presenting authors include Ann Hood, Meredith

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Hall, Jaed Coffin, Bill Burke, Colin Sargent, John Manderino, Andrew McNabb, Alex Irvine, Tilar Mazzeo, Hannah Holmes, Bill Roorbach, Kim Wilson, Lewis Robinson, Reza Jalali, and Lisa Carey.

The evening of April 4, the public is invited to attend the Annual Poetry Party starting at 7 p.m. at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies. The evening includes the Highball Jazz Trio, Spoken Word performances, and the Northeast Regional Poetry Slam. The event is presented by Port Veritas and hosted by Salt.

On Sunday evening, April 5, at 7 p.m., Portland Stage Company at 25A Forest Avenue will present Longfellow's Shorts, featuring a dramatic reading of selections from Water Dogs, a new novel by Lewis Robinson.

Established in 2002 by the Office of the First Lady, Maine Reads is dedicated to a more literate Maine through meaningful programs that create awareness and encourage collaboration among literacy providers.

In addition to the Maine Festival of the Book, Maine Reads presents Read With ME., which distributes books to kindergartners statewide, and the Maine Community Literacy Project, which supports libraries statewide. Maine Reads is a 501c3 nonprofit.

For more information, please visit www.mainereads.org or call 207-871-9100.

The schedule of events follows.

Maine Festival of the Book 2009

The Maine Festival of the Book, presented by Maine Reads, run April 2- 5, 2009 in Portland. A full day of programming will be presented Saturday, April 4 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Abromson center at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. With the exception of April 3, events are open to the public and free.

Schedule of Events

Thursday, April 2

4 p.m. The History of the Book: A Visual Chronology Glickman Family Library, USM

Archivist Richard Lindemann gives a visual presentation. A reception follows. (Presented by the Kate Cheney Chappell '83 Center for Book Arts at USM)

Friday, April 3

Noon Youth Outreach

A presentation by cartoonist/graphic novelist Jay Piscopo for selected eighth graders. (Presented in conjunction with Jobs for Maine's Graduates and hosted by Unum)

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6 p.m. Opening Night: A Reception with the Authors

A private party for presenting authors and major sponsors. (Sold out.)

Saturday, April 4

Abromson Center, USM

Programs are one-hour long and are held concurrently with author book signings immediately following.

Unless otherwise noted, Saturday's events will be held at the Abromson Center, off Bedford Street, University of Southern Maine. Free parking is available in the garage behind the Abromson Center.

9:30 a.m. Springboards for Literary Pursuits

For Colin Sargent and John Manderino the focus of each of their new books is derived from musings. Sargent built his historical novel on the strange and exotic life of Sacagawea's son Jean Baptiste and the question, "Whatever happened to the expedition papoose of the Lewis & Clark Voyage of Discovery?" For Manderino, it's the entanglements of real life and the lives in the movies that become the basis for his memoir. The authors discuss their inspirations and read from their books.

9: 30 a.m. The Changing Face of Maine: New Mainers

The changing landscape of Maine's population enriches our communities, while raising new challenges. In a multi-media presentation, Reza Jalali discusses this book, which chronicles the lives of some of these new Mainers.

11 a.m. Jane Austen's Gardens: Love in the Shrubbery

Kim Wilson (In the Garden with Jane Austen) explores the roles of gardens in the lives and loves of Austen and her characters.

11 a.m. Writing Your Way Back Home

Memoirists Meredith Hall (Without A Map) and Jaed Coffin (A Chant to Soothe Wild Elephants) discuss the challenges and joys of writing about the places—both spiritual and geographical—where they and their stories began.

12:30 p.m. Wavering Towards Reality: The Writing Life

In her books The Knitting Circle and Comfort: A Journey Through Grief, Ann Hood explores loss fictionally and through memoir. In this presentation, she will discuss how words deserted her after the loss of her 5 year old daughter Grace, and how she found hope and the ability to write again in unexpected ways. Hood will explore the differences between the two genres, and she will talk about the writing life.

12:30 p.m. What's Your Life Worth?

Alex Irvine reads from his near-future noir novel Buyout, and discusses prison issues raised in the book.

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2 p.m. From Champagne to CNN: Tales of Two of History's Great Entrepreneurs

Tilar Mazzeo (The Widow Cliquot: The Story of the Champagne Empire and the Woman Who Rules It) and Bill Burke (Call Me Ted) discuss their New York Times best-selling biographies of Madame Clicquot and Ted Turner, and reveal their tycoon's secrets of success and the art of living well.

2 p.m. Meeting of the Apes

Two particularly quick-witted and talkative apes, Hannah Holmes (The Well-Dressed Ape) and Bill Roorbach (Temple Stream), address their collisions with the rest of the natural world. This strangely self-analytical species often displays a fascination with its role in nature, a practice demonstrated differently in each of these prime primates. Roorbach's recent work has taken him into the woods and fields behind his own house, a primitive but not always primate domain. Hannah Holmes has turned inward, primarily, to consider the fundamental animalness of this ape we so often mistake for something extraordinary.

3:30 p.m. Maine as Inspiration and the Craft of Writing: A panel Discussion

Lewis Robinson (Water Dogs), Andrew McNabb (The Body of This) and Lisa Carey (Love in the Asylum) discuss what has brought them to their respective places in the literary world today and why Maine provides such rich inspiration for writers. Moderated by Ari Meil.

7 p.m. Annual Poetry Party

Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, 561 Congress Street Port Youth Spoken Word performance followed by cocktail hour featuring the Highball Jazz Trio and the North East Regional Poetry Slam invitational. (Presented by Port Veritas in conjunction with Salt Institute)

Sunday, April 5

7 p.m. Longfellow's Shorts

Portland Stage Company, 25A Forest Avenue

A dramatic reading of selections from Water Dogs, a new novel by Lewis Robinson. (Presented by Portland Stage Company)

Authors/Presenters Biographical Information

Bill Burke, the author of Call Me Ted, is an experienced media executive who held various positions at Tuner Broadcasting and Time Warner, including president of TBS SuperStation and general manager of Turner Classic Movies. He also served as president and CEO of The Weather Channel Companies.

Lisa Carey is the author of The Mermaids Singing, In the Country of the Young, and Love in the Asylum. She lived in Ireland for five years and now resides in Portland.

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Jaed Coffin is the author of the memoir A Chant to Soothe Wild Elephants, which chronicles the time he spent as a Buddhist monk in his mother's native village in Thailand. He teaches at University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast MFA program.

Rebecca Goodale is a Portland artist who creates unique and limited edition artist's books with sculptural components. She teaches at USM.

Meredith Hall's memoir, Without a Map, was a New York Times bestseller. Hall won the Pushcart Prize, the Gift of Freedom and the Maine Arts Commission's Artist Fellowship. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, and Southern Review. She teaches in University of New Hampshire's MFA program. Hannah Holmes is the author of Suburban Safari and The Secret Life of Dust. Her writing has appeared in the New York Times Magazine, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Discover, Outside, and many more. Ann Hood's most recent books are The Knitting Circle, a novel for young adults entitled How I Saved My Father's Life (and Ruined Everything Else), and her memoir Comfort: A Journey Through Grief. She is the author of seven other novels, and a collection of short stories. Many of her essays and short stories have appeared in publications, including The New York Times, Good Housekeeping, Bon Appetit, Traveler, Food and Wine, The Paris Review, and Ladies Home Journal.

Alex Irvine has written fourteen books and a number of comics, articles, and short stories. He lives in South Portland and teaches at the University of Maine. www.alexanderirvine.net

Reza Jalali, a Muslim born in Iran, is a human rights activist who writes and speaks nationally and locally on Islam and the politics of the Middle East and teaches at the University of Southern Maine. He has written the forward to New Mainers and has a children's book coming out, both by Tilbury House.

Richard Lindemann is the Director of the George J. Mitchell Special Collections and Archives, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library at Bowdoin College.

John Manderino is the author of the 2008 memoir Crying at Movies. A writing coach, he is also the author of three novels and many plays and short stories.

Tilar J. Mazzeo is the author of the New York Times bestselling biography The Widow Clicquot: The Story of a Champagne Empire and the Woman Who Ruled It, Back Lane Wineries of Sonoma, and the forthcoming Back Lane Wineries of Napa. She is an assistant professor of English at Colby College.

Andrew McNabb, author of The Body of This, lives in Portland with his wife and four young children. His short stories have appeared in a range of literary venues including The Missouri Review and "Not Safe, But Good: Best Christian Short Stories, 2007. He is currently at work on a memoir and treatise to his children.

Ari Meil is the publisher of Warren Machine Company, a Portland publisher dedicated to integrating the newest technology into publishing, supporting storytelling in our daily lives and offering fair pay to authors.

Jay Piscopo is the author/illustrator of The Undersea Adventures of Capt'n Eli all-ages graphic novel series. He also co-created the groundbreaking Scrap City Pack Rats.

Lewis Robinson is the author of the novel Water Dogs and the story collection Officer Friendly. He lives in Portland and teaches in the Stonecoast MFA program.

Bill Roorbach is the author of eight books of fiction and nonfiction, including Temple Stream, Big Bend, and Writing Life Stories. His short work has appeared in numerous publications including Harper's, The Atlantic, and The New York Times Magazine. He lives in Farmington, Maine. www.billroorbach.com

Colin Sargent is a playwright and the author of three books of poetry. He is also the founding editor and publisher of Portland Magazine. Museum of Human Beings is his first novel. www.museumofhumanbeings.com

Kim Wilson is a writer, editor, gardening enthusiast, and longtime member of the Jane Austen Society of North America. She is the author of In the Garden with Jane Austen and Tea with Jane Austen.

Directions to the Abromson Center, University of Southern Maine, Portland

From I-295: take exit 6B (Forest Avenue North) in Portland. Off the exit, immediately move to the far left lane on Forest Avenue to prepare for a left turn at the first stoplight (intersection of Forest Avenue and Bedford Street). Turn left onto Bedford Street at the stoplight and continue underneath the USM Alumni Skywalk. Immediately after the Skywalk, turn left onto Surrenden Street and continue into the USM Parking Garage.

If approaching the campus from Brighton Avenue: follow Brighton Avenue towards downtown until it turns into Bedford Street. Turn right onto Surrenden Street immediately before the USM Alumni Skywalk, and continue into the USM Parking Garage. Free parking!

Directions to Downtown (Portland Stage Company and Salt Institute) From I-95 North take exit 44 (I-295 North). From I-295 North take exit 6A, Forest Avenue South. Stay on Forest Avenue through four traffic lights. After fourth traffic light Portland Stage is the 4th building on the left (in the Portland Performing Arts Center, 25A Forest Ave.); Salt Institute is around the corner at 561 Congress Street.

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Governor Certifies Request for Recovery Funds for the Arts

March 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a certification to request funds made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for the arts in Maine. The Maine Arts Commission will be distributing nearly $300,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts to arts and cultural institutions in Maine for job retention.

"These funds will help our cultural organizations that contribute so much to the character of Maine, including our creative economy, downtown revitalization and cultural tourism," Governor Baldacci said. "The arts provide economic stability to our state both through direct jobs and ripple impacts as well as a creative outlet for thousands of our citizens. Whether as an artist or a spectator experiencing music, theater, painting, sculpting or photography, the arts play an extremely important role in our society."

The State of Maine will receive $293,100 through a formula based on population. The Maine Arts Commission will deliver the funds through a competitive grant process. Funds will be distributed by the end of June in $10,000 maximum grant awards to nonprofit arts organizations.

The Recovery Act stipulates that the Governor of any state or agency thereof requesting American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds must certify not later than 45 days after enactment of the Act that the state will request and use the funds. The deadline for Governor's certification is April 3, 2009.

Governor Baldacci was joined for the signing by the Chair of the Maine Arts Commission John Rohman, Director of the Maine Arts Commission Donna McNeil, and several supporters of the arts from throughout the State of Maine.

For more information on the Maine Arts Commission, visit http://www.mainearts.com/

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Governor Baldacci Proclaims Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

March 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed the month of April 2009 as "Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month" throughout the State of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation during a rally at the State House, which served as the culmination of the "Trooper Relay."

The sixth annual Trooper Relay is designed to highlight awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention activities in Maine. Troopers from all regions collected puzzle pieces to carry to the State House and put together to form a pinwheel – the symbol of child abuse and neglect prevention. A Maine State Trooper arrived at the Hall of Flags delivering to Governor Baldacci the final piece of the puzzle. The Governor put the final piece in place before speaking at the rally.

"Community-based prevention programs, many of which are highlighted here today, work to strengthen families and ensure they are connected to needed and available services," Governor Baldacci said. "I encourage everyone to join in the many events and activities ongoing throughout Maine in April."

In addition to Governor Baldacci, other speakers at the rally included Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Brenda Harvey; Public Safety Commissioner Anne Jordan; Maine State Police Col. Patrick Fleming; and Renee Blanchet of the Maine Association of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils. More than 20 advocates of child abuse and neglect prevention awareness were also at the rally to lend their support.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, child abuse is a community problem and finding solutions depends on the environment of people throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, the effects of child abuse are felt by whole communities, and need to be addressed by the entire community; and

WHEREAS, effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships created among social service agencies, schools, religious organizations, businesses and law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, youth-serving prevention programs offer positive alternatives for young people and encourage youth to develop strong ties to their community; and

WHEREAS, all citizens should become more aware of child abuse and its prevention, and become involved in supporting parents to raise their children in a safe, nurturing environment,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim April, 2009 as

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this month by dedicating ourselves to the task of improving the quality of life for all children.

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Maine and New Brunswick Support International Energy Corridor

March 25, 2009

Private Sector to Partner in Feasibility Study for Future Energy Projects

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci and Premier Shawn Graham announced today that they will work together to explore the development of a Northeast Energy Corridor.

Irving Oil also announced today that it is conducting commercial and technical feasibility on the first phase of development of the Northeast Energy Corridor, which could include 1,200 – 1,500MW of electrical transmission capability.

The improved transmission capability, along with the potential for increased natural gas co-generation, would make it possible to develop more wind power in Maine and New Brunswick.

The Northeast Energy Corridor would support the development of diverse energy sources in both jurisdictions for use in the region and in the Northeast United States.

If implemented, the Northeast Corridor would connect Canada and the U.S., crossing from New Brunswick into Maine, and would reliably and securely deliver a diverse portfolio of energy products from Maine and New Brunswick to the Northeast in the most economically and environmentally efficient way.

"Great potential exists for Maine and New Brunswick to grow and share clean, renewable energy," said Governor John Baldacci. "For the full potential to be realized, regional transmission capacity must expand. Exploring the potential for private investment in the Northeast Energy Corridor is a vital next step to realizing our shared goals of achieving energy independence, accessing reliable and affordable energy, and reducing carbon emissions on both sides of the border."

The corridor would provide reliable and secure access for electricity, with an emphasis on renewable power, including wind and tidal, as well as natural-gas-fired co-generation.

"Through these challenging economic times, New Brunswick remains focused on a vision of economic self-sufficiency," said Premier Shawn Graham. "The concept of a fully integrated Northeast Energy Corridor will provide tangible economic, environmental and energy self-sufficiency benefits for the citizens and businesses of New Brunswick and our friends and neighbors in the State of Maine. The proposed energy corridor will help accelerate the development and deployment of clean, renewable and greenhouse gas free electricity generation resources in both New Brunswick and Maine, as well as provide leadership in helping address and support the overall North American energy security agenda."

The Northeast Energy Corridor would further the shared strategic objectives of the United States and Canada in the areas of energy supply and energy security; the development of green power and carbon dioxide reduction; economic development and stimulus; and trade. The corridor would help to attract

significant direct investment to the region and support Maine's and New Brunswick's energy self-sufficiency goals.

"This is another important step in our approach to energy independence," said John Kerry, Director of Maine's Office of Energy Independence and Security. "Maine and New Brunswick have begun a process to realize our shared goal to increase the long-term supply of secure, reliable and clean energy to our region."

"We are motivated by Premier Graham's and Governor Baldacci's long-term vision for the growth of our region, and are pleased to be playing a role in helping to develop the concept," said Kenneth Irving of Irving Oil. "The Northeast Energy Corridor would involve a complex series of projects that would require a high level of collaboration and effort to attract companies to come invest in our region. The undertaking is particularly challenging at a time when our industry and the global economy face a high degree of uncertainty. There is still a long road and many decisions ahead of us, but we wanted to respond to our governments' and our communities' desire to continue to pursue energy projects that would meet shared social, economic, and environmental goals."

Governor Baldacci outlined a process by which the State will pursue the exploratory phase on the Maine side of the border.

"I am directing my Director of the Office of Energy Independence and Security, John Kerry, and the Public Advocate, Richard Davies, to lead this exploratory phase, in concert with New Brunswick's efforts and in cooperation with Irving Oil," said the Governor. "They will advise me regarding the best course of action to implement this concept with New Brunswick. I am also directing them to review and consider utilizing the designation process for an 'Energy Infrastructure Corridor' that was enacted in 2008 by the Maine Legislature."

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Governor Baldacci Salutes Cianbro Workers in Brewer

March 25, 2009

BREWER – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Brewer, Bangor and Cianbro, representatives from Maine's Congressional Delegation and others to celebrate a milestone achievement for workers at the former Eastern Fine Paper facility. The ceremony celebrated the first of 53 massive refinery modules which will depart Brewer for Port Arthur, Texas, to become part of the largest refinery in the United States.

"A lot has changed here since Eastern Fine Paper closed in 2004," Governor Baldacci said. "This community didn't give up and they didn't take it lying down. Now, we are here to celebrate Cianbro's belief in this facility, this area, and the workers who are here with us today. Maine workers are known for their quality, pride and craftsmanship and are respected around the world because of it. This celebration today is a celebration for this work force."

The Governor also thanked Cianbro President & CEO Pete Vigue for his vision for the former Eastern Fine Paper facility.

"This is truly amazing," the Governor said. "This is a site where an old paper mill was going bankrupt. It was a site where a lot of people thought that the door had finally shut and there were no more opportunities here. But to Pete Vigue's credit, he was never willing to take 'no' for an answer, his drive to always try and find an opportunity and never give up, it's that kind of spirit and leadership that inspires people and makes good things happen.""

The barge is scheduled to depart from Cianbro's Brewer facility on Thursday for Texas.

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Governor Announces Nominations

March 26, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced nominations to the District Court; Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Advisory Council; and the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

Marilyn Stavros, of Kennebunkport, is being nominated as an Active Retired District Court Judge. Judge Stavros has served on the District Court for nearly four years. Prior to that, Judge Stavros served as a Magistrate in the Family Division of the Maine District Court. She also held the position of Assistant Attorney General for nearly 10 years. Judge Stavros holds a B.S. from Simmons College and a J.D. from University of Maine School of Law.

Stephen Philbrick and John Simko are being appointed to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Advisory Council.

Philbrick, of Oquossoc, is being reappointed to the Council. He is the owner of a sporting camp in the Western Mountains. Philbrick has been a professional guide for 38 years and is a registered Maine Guide Master. He holds an undergraduate degree from Paul Smith College and a master's degree from Florida International University.

Simko, of Greenville, is a new appointment. He has served as town manager of Greenville for 9 years. Prior to that, Simko was the town manager of Sangerville. He has been a wilderness Emergency Medical Technician for more than a decade. Simko earned a B.A. from Bowdoin College.

Edward C. Kelleher, a resident of Scarborough, is being nominated for the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Kelleher, who has been retired for a year, had served for 21 years as a member of the administrative team for the Judicial Branch of the State of Maine. He served in the Maine State Legislature from 1969 to 1984, representing Bangor.

The nominations must be reviewed by the respective committees of oversight and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor and First Lady Unveil Mentoring Grant

March 27, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci today joined key partners to announce a $500,000 federal grant to begin a mentoring program across the State. The program launched today: "The Communities for Children & Youth College/Community Mentoring Project," will connect selected college students with elementary, middle and high school students identified as needing extra attention.

First Lady Karen Baldacci, who serves as the chair of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, said the grant will provide new opportunities for Maine youth. "By pairing younger students in need of extra support with successful college students, we can help children keep out of trouble and raise their sights toward a college education," said the First Lady. "This program is a great model of local communities and private partners working with State government to support positive youth development programs and prevention efforts."

The project is a collaborative between the Children's Cabinet's Communities for Children & Youth, the Maine Department of Corrections and Jobs for Maine's Graduates.

Modeled after an existing mentoring program at Colby College, the grant enables the expansion of or start of mentoring programs at Colby College, Bowdoin College, the University of New England, the University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, USM Lewiston/Auburn and the University of Maine at Augusta.

Participating college students will complete an application process and receive training prior to being matched with eligible children. The goal is to have sufficient numbers of mentors at each of the seven colleges and universities to serve 500 young people in the State over the next three years.

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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Governor Discusses Benefits of Transportation Investments

April 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reiterated his support for transportation infrastructure investments. The Governor told organizations gathered for Transportation Day at the State House that the biggest challenges faced by businesses today are the cost of energy and the cost of transportation, and continued investments must be made in order to allow the State to grow beyond the global recession.

"If we don't invest in our roads, rails, ports and airports, businesses cannot efficiently get their goods to market," Governor Baldacci said. "We need to invest if we want to grow out of the recession. We need sound investments to ensure that businesses and people have the tools to be more successful to compete around the globe."

The Governor stressed the importance of the $143 million in Recovery Act funds for highways, bridges and transit, which are already putting people to work in Maine. He also advocated for his investment package, which was presented last month.

The Governor's $306 million investment package includes $75 million for highways and bridges, and another $53 million for rail, ports, transit and trails. The $75 million for roads and bridges will be matched by $90 million in federal funding. Governor Baldacci says the investments will not only help the State's transportation infrastructure, it will also invest in Maine people by putting them to work.

"This spring, summer and fall, we are going to put about 11,000 people to work on transportation projects," the Governor said. "And the State's investment package that I presented last month will create thousands of jobs over three years."

Governor Baldacci told the group that on Thursday Maine DOT will submit its biennial capital work plan for fiscal years 2010 – 2011 to the Transportation Committee and to the Maine Legislature. The work plan includes $809 million in capital projects and more than $61 million in transit operating support.

"The hundreds of projects included in this program will provide yet another major injection of money into our economy and more long-term benefits for our State," Governor Baldacci said. "The highway and bridge projects in this work plan alone can be expected to create or preserve more than 15,600 jobs. What Maine needs now is jobs. The Recovery funds, combined with my proposed investment package and the Maine DOT's biennial work plan will put people to work. That is the best way to begin stimulating our economy again."

Nearly 20 public and private transportation groups were at the State House for Transportation Day, which was sponsored by the Maine Better Transportation Association.

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Governor Honors Maine Coalition against Sexual Assault Award Recipients

April 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today helped honor eight individuals who show commitment to the mission of the Maine Coalition against Sexual Assault by advocating for victims and survivors and effectively raising awareness. Those eight individuals received awards from the Coalition during a ceremony at the Blaine House.

"While Maine's crime rate is relatively low, sexual assault continues to be a dangerous problem in the State," Governor Baldacci said. "We all have a responsibility to stand up against sexual assault and domestic violence. The eight individuals we honor today have gone above and beyond in fighting this serious crime."

This year marks the 13th year the Maine Coalition against Sexual Assault has presented the awards. Award recipients include:

Make a Difference Award: Former Attorney General Steve Rowe

Legislative Award: Former Senate President Beth Edmonds

Prosecutors' Award: District Attorneys Evert Fowle and Geoff Rushlau

Law Enforcement Award: Lieutenant Mark Waltz

Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Award: Sherri Thornton, RN, SAFE, SANE-A

Special Recognition: U.S. Attorney Paula Silsby and Victim/witness Coordinator Heather Putnam, U.S. District Court for the State of Maine

Governor Baldacci also proclaimed April, 2009, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the State of Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, one of every four Maine women, and one of every thirteen Maine men, experience sexual assault at some point in their lives; and

WHEREAS, throughout the State of Maine there are sexual assault support centers, with specially trained staff and volunteers who are available to offer support and advocacy to victims/survivors of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an opportunity to create awareness about sexual violence and the impact it has on victims/survivors and all Maine communities; and

WHEREAS, victims/survivors should know that they are not alone and that there are free and confidential services available to help them through their healing processes; and

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WHEREAS, the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Maine's ten sexual assault support centers ask for the public's support as they continue to work to create safe and healthy communities by striving to eliminate sexual violence in Maine,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2009 as

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Names FAME CEO

April 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he has nominated Elizabeth L. Bordowitz to be Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). Ms. Bordowitz will lead an agency critical to the goals of increasing economic and educational opportunities for the people of Maine.

"Beth Bordowitz brings twenty years of expertise to this agency, the last year and a half of which she has served as Acting CEO," stated Governor Baldacci. "Her leadership and skills have been instrumental during this very difficult global financial crisis. I am confident that she will strengthen FAME and the ability of individuals and families to prosper and seek new opportunities across the state."

A resident of Portland, Bordowitz has served as acting CEO of FAME since October 2007. She has concurrently served as General Counsel, a position she's held in the agency since 1995. She began her career at FAME as assistant counsel in 1989.

Bordowitz has extensive experience negotiating financial transactions and contracts for the Agency and working with federal regulators. She has provided counsel on various capital investments. Bordowitz has been instrumental in the growth and maintenance of the State's 529 College Savings Program.

Bordowitz earned her undergraduate degree from Rutgers College. She holds a graduate degree from Eagleton Institute of Politics and earned her J.D. at Rutgers University School of Law.

"Since she took over as Acting CEO a year and a half ago, Beth has developed strong relationships throughout the state, and I am confident she will continue to build closer ties with members of the education and business communities," said Governor Baldacci. "Beth's talents will aid the State in taking advantage of opportunities to lay a solid foundation for Maine's economic future."

FAME, a quasi-independent state agency established in 1983, provides innovative financial solutions to help Maine people and businesses pursue educational and business opportunities. Providing a wide array of business financing programs, FAME ensures that Maine businesses have access to capital. FAME helps students and families meet the costs of higher education through a variety of loan, grant and scholarship programs. To learn more about FAME or any of the above programs, please visit www.famemaine.com

Bordowitz's nomination must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development and is subject to confirmation by the Senate.

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Governor Pledges Support for Wausau Workers

April 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today pledged the full support of his Administration to work with the community of Jay following the most recent plant closure announcement impacting Maine's paper industry.

On Tuesday, Wausau Paper said it would cease operations at the Jay mill by May 31, 2009. The closure will mean 96 mill workers will lose their jobs.

"Maine's pulp and paper industry, like other sectors important to Maine's economic base, is feeling the weight of the global recession," Governor Baldacci said. "Although the effects of the economic crisis have dealt the State another blow, I will continue to work to bring opportunity to the Town of Jay and to the high-quality workers of the Wausau Mill."

The Governor spoke today with Jay town manager Ruth Marden to express his commitment to the efforts of the town and the community to find potential investors for the plant.

"We will ensure that those laid off by Wausau Paper will receive assistance to help them through this difficult time. Additionally, I have assigned Rosaire Pelletier, my senior forest products advisor, to work in conjunction with Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development to try to find a way to keep the mill viable for other potential investors," said the Governor.

The Department of Labor will also deploy Rapid Response Teams to the community to begin helping workers prepare for the announced closure.

According to Wausau, the company took the step of closing the Jay mill to ensure the company remains competitive in a challenging and uncertain business environment.

"Maine stands behind our neighbors in times of great adversity, and we will do so again now as the community in Jay is going through this very difficult time," Governor Baldacci said.

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Governor Baldacci Honors Lifetime Achievements of Mainers

April 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today opened the 7th annual Remember ME project at the State House. The project honored 33 individuals who live, or have lived, in nursing homes and residential care facilities around the state.

"This is a luxury for us to have all of you here today," Governor Baldacci told the honorees. "You have raised families, you have contributed to your communities, and you have sacrificed for your country, putting your life on the line for all of us to have the freedoms and liberties that we are enjoying today. It is a tremendous honor to welcome you here."

More than 250 people attended the ceremony in the Hall of Flags, which honored a prestigious group, including war heroes, writers, nurses, teachers, mentors and leaders.

"We don't spend enough time carrying the heritage, culture and traditions from the past to the future," the Governor said. "Sometimes your children and grandchildren don't have the opportunity to spend that time with you. Those memories, the roots, the cultures and traditions are important because they give us our foundation."

The event was sponsored by the Maine Health Care Association.

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Governor Applauds Confirmation of Karen Gordon Mills to Head U.S. Small Business Administration

April 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today applauded the United States Senate confirmation of Karen Gordon Mills as Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"Karen Mills will contribute her impressive leadership, skills and expertise to aid small businesses during this critical time in our national economy," said Governor Baldacci. "I have been particularly impressed with her ability to work in a bipartisan fashion. She will bring fresh ideas and an aggressive approach to increasing the competitiveness of the nation's small businesses."

Governor Baldacci credited Mills with providing vision and energy to help pass a jobs bond to support research and development in economic clusters important to Maine's economic health and growth.

Mills chaired the Governor's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, which provided essential advice to the Administration on policies to promote business development across the State, including key areas for investment in Maine's future.

Mills leant considerable leadership to the development of the Baldacci Administration's initiatives to finding efficiencies and cost savings in the way government does business.

"Karen Mills has been a close adviser and friend," Governor Baldacci said. "Her contributions to small business health in Maine have been substantial, and I am confident she will contribute greatly to improving U.S. competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation."

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Governor Baldacci Statement on Closing of West Point Home in Biddeford

April 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement on the announcement that West Point Home, a blanket manufacturer in Biddeford, will be closing in June.

"The announcement that West Point Home is closing is difficult news," Governor Baldacci said. "The company has had a tremendous history in Biddeford and a loyal workforce. We will offer assistance to workers and their families through Rapid Response teams and the Department of Economic and Community Development will work to explore any potential opportunities for the facility."

As a result of the closure, more than 100 people will be put out of work.

"These are tough times, but the State will not leave these workers out on their own," the Governor said. "We will pull together and offer every form of assistance available to help the affected workforce and their families."

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Governor Announces Nomination to Workers' Compensation Board

April 6, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the nomination of Sophia Leotsakos Wilson to the Workers' Compensation Board.

Wilson has served as the town manager of Brownville for more than eight years. Prior to that experience, she worked for more than four years as a community response coordinator for Womancare/Aegis Association. She has served as an Executive Committee Member of the Maine Municipal Association.

Wilson, a Dover-Foxcroft resident, earned an undergraduate degree and Master's degree from the University of Maine.

The mission of the Workers' Compensation Board is to serve the employees and employers of the State fairly and expeditiously by ensuring compliance with the workers' compensation laws, ensuring the prompt delivery of benefits legally due, promoting the prevention of disputes, utilizing dispute resolution to reduce litigation and facilitating labor-management cooperation.

The nomination must be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Labor and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor Baldacci Proclaims Alcohol Awareness Month

April 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented a proclamation naming the month of April 2009 as Alcohol Awareness Month in the State of Maine.

"We all need to acknowledge the costs of substance abuse," Governor Baldacci said. "In Maine the cost is more than $900 million annually, with the majority of this due to alcohol abuse. This cost includes medical care and emergency room visits, lost productivity in the workplace, judicial and corrections costs, as well as lost lives."

The Governor presented the proclamation during a Hall of Flags ceremony with officials from the Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse, the Maine Public Health Association and the Maine Office of Substance Abuse. Youth groups from Nokomis Regional High School in Newport and Lisbon High School were also at the ceremony.

"Prevention and education efforts have been demonstrated to help deter our youth from substance abuse, delinquency, crime and incarceration," the Governor said. "Studies have shown that each dollar invested in prevention helps to achieve savings of $7 to $10 in areas such as substance abuse treatment and criminal justice system costs, not to mention the wider benefits for the youth, their families and our communities. Alcohol abuse is a community problem and it requires a community solution."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, since 1987, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) has designated April as national "Alcohol Awareness Month"; and

WHEREAS, alcohol abuse and addiction impacts our communities on many levels, from the workplace, to school and the home, and the total cost for substance abuse in Maine is estimated to be nearly $900 million annually with the majority of this due to alcohol abuse; and

WHEREAS, alcohol abuse is a public health problem that needs to be addressed in our communities through joint efforts between parents, schools, community organizations, religious communities, business leaders, government agencies and young people; and

WHEREAS, during this year's Alcohol Awareness campaign, the important issues of preventing underage drinking, parent modeling, responsible retailing and workplace prevention will be highlighted in activities across Maine; and

WHEREAS, in Maine, due to prevention efforts the overall lifetime alcohol use rate among Maine's 6th to 12th grade students has dropped consistently from 70.7% in 1995 to 44.3% in 2008 according to the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS); and

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WHEREAS, even though we have seen this steady decline in alcohol use among our youth, alcohol continues to be the number one drug of choice for Maine's young people with devastating consequences; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, one in fifteen eighth graders and nearly one in four 12th grade students reported having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row (considered binge drinking) in the two weeks before taking the MYDAUS; and

WHEREAS, Alcohol Awareness Month offers advocates of substance abuse prevention the opportunity to educate the public and policymakers about the effectiveness of prevention and intervention,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2009 as

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Baldacci Announces Mobilize Maine Initiative

April 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from FairPoint Communications, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Quality of Place Council and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce to announce the Mobilize Maine Initiative. Mobilize Maine is a locally driven initiative that provides regional data and growth forecasting to economic development professionals throughout the State.

"In these challenging times we must rely on creative partnerships to stretch limited resources," Governor Baldacci said. "With FairPoint Communications as our partner, we will focus on an asset-based and regional-based economic development strategy. Instead of our communities being in a reactive mode economically, Mobilize Maine will enable our distinctive regions to be proactive and to prepare and execute their own comprehensive development activities."

FairPoint Communications has commissioned ViTAL Economy, an economic consultant, to develop an economic development model for northern New England. The model is part of FairPoint's initiative to assist economic development efforts in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

The modeling tool organizes the State into six regions and provides economic development officials with information on the areas' current economic status. The tool can also forecast the impact of future economic and community development strategies in each region.

Officials say that the initiative will uncover unique assets and potential of each region, and focus on the regions' strengths and advantages to build economic development.

"I'm excited about Mobilize Maine," the Governor said. "It's economic development from the ground up, instead of the top down."

The text of the Executive Order follows:

AN ORDER TO DIRECT STATE AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES TO COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND MAINE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS IN CREATION OF REGIONAL ASSET-BASED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

WHEREAS, asset-based development has been demonstrated to be a necessary complement to traditional, needs-based efforts in building the new, knowledge-based economy; and

WHEREAS, asset-based development refers to initiatives that build directly upon a region's strengths and competitive advantages to generate jobs and economic growth; and

WHEREAS, asset-based development begins with identifying a region's marketable assets, and designs investment strategies that will enhance and connect these assets to job creation; and

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WHEREAS, Maine's place-based assets define our state's quality of place and are today key drivers of Maine's economic and community development; and

WHEREAS, Maine's Economic Development Districts (Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, Mid-Coast Economic Development District, Northern Maine Development Commission, and Southern Maine Economic Development District) can catalyze the creation of regional asset-based development strategies for Maine's economy by involving representatives from all related sectors of each region's economy and community; and

WHEREAS, Vital Economy, Inc., a consultant of FairPoint Communications, Inc., will provide resources to and work with each of Maine's Economic Development Districts to inventory and strengthen the quality of place assets and the assets of one industry sector for each District; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that state agencies and instrumentalities engage in effective and consistent coordination with Maine's Economic Development Districts in support of this effort;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the following:

All departments, agencies, and other instrumentalities of the State shall collaborate with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and Maine's Economic Development Districts in the development of regional asset-based development strategies, and shall provide all data, reports, and information requested as related to this effort.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is April 6, 2009.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Drivers License Bill

April 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 169, An Act to Allow a Newly Licensed Driver to Transport a Foreign Exchange Student Who Lives with That Driver's Family. Sen. Debra Plowman (R-Penobscot) sponsored the legislation, which was passed last month.

"This law is meant to help foreign exchange students in our State and their host families," Governor Baldacci said. "Our goal is to ensure that exchange students enjoy their stay here, learn a lot, and hopefully come back to visit our State again someday."

Nearly 20 foreign exchange students were in the Governor's Office this afternoon to witness the ceremonial signing.

The law allows newly licensed drivers to give rides to foreign exchange students who are living in their homes. Existing State law prohibits drivers under the age of 18 from giving rides to people who are not part of their family.

The legislation was signed as an emergency measure, meaning it took effect when the Governor officially signed it into law last month.

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Maine National Guard Health Report Submitted to Governor and Legislature

April 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Leadership of the Maine Legislature today welcomed Barbara Damon-Day to the State House where she presented to them the report of the Commission to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard.

A Joint Resolution passed in the Legislature to send the eight recommendations of the report to President Obama, the President of the U.S. Senate, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Maine Congressional Delegation. Governor Baldacci is including a cover letter to each document being sent to Washington, D.C., urging consideration of federal action to implement the recommendations.

Governor Baldacci commended Barbara Damon-Day, the other Commission members, and the Legislature for their efforts to protect the lives of all members of the National Guard, Reserves and Armed Services.

"We all owe a great debt of gratitude to our brave soldiers who have answered our nation's call," said the Governor. "All too often, our soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Many others have returned home, but with deep physical or psychological wounds. The State of Maine joins our federal government in seeking to provide the best care possible to these heroes."

The Commission was established in 2007 by a Governor's bill, which was sponsored by Speaker Glenn Cummings and received unanimous support in the State Legislature. The legislation was born out of the advocacy of Barbara Damon-Day, the mother of Patrick Damon. Damon died on June 15, 2006, in Afghanistan during his service with the Maine National Guard. Since his death, his mother and other family members have made it a priority to make improved health care practices available to current and future Guard members. Damon had served as a staff member for the Maine House of Representatives and in the Baldacci Administration.

Recommendations being sent to Washington, D.C., include increasing efforts to diagnosis and treat illnesses; making all anthrax vaccine safety data available to independent researchers; establishing a seamless electronic medical records system between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs; and improving standards for the medical disability process.

"Our country has a moral obligation to make sure we take care of those we send into harm's way - not only when they are in combat, but also when they come home," said Governor Baldacci.

Information on the Joint Resolution is posted on the Maine Legislature's Web site:http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?ID=280032445

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Auxiliary Power Units Bill

April 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 37, An Act to Allow a Weight Tolerance for Vehicle Auxiliary Power Units. The legislation extends a weight tolerance for vehicle auxiliary power units in the laws governing highway weight limits for vehicles.

Auxiliary Power Units are integrated systems used to provide heat, air conditioning, engine warming or electricity components on a heavy duty vehicle, reducing the need to leave the vehicle running.

"This new law helps in our efforts to incentivize the use of Auxiliary Power Units, which are devices that reduce fuel use by reducing idling," Governor Baldacci said. "This furthers our State along in our goal to combat greenhouse gas emissions and it mirrors federal rules."

Bill sponsor Rep. Charles Theriault (D-Madawaska) was at the ceremonial signing, as were other legislators and supporters.

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Governor Speaks to the Future of Maine's Pulp and Paper Industry

April 8, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today delivered the welcoming speech at the opening of Paper Days 2009, a two-day conference of the pulp and paper industry. This year's focus is the future of the industry. The Governor noted that while Maine's paper industry is not immune from the global recession, he sees reason for hope for the continued strength of this vital industry in the State.

"Maine remains the second-largest paper producer in the nation, and production level here is higher than ever before," said the Governor. "While Maine is in the midst of a global recession, the State's commitment to the industry is unwaivering. These are good jobs, supporting Maine businesses and towns as well as the State's economy. Our success is largely dependent on our ability to adapt to the times. Value added products, produced in a sustainable way, are the future of the forest products industry in Maine."

Pulp and paper contribute nearly $1.5 billion to the gross state product and represent 20 percent of State exports. Nearly $900 million is spent by paper companies in-state on goods and services, and the industry is the lifeblood of many rural Maine communities.

"We have the ingenuity here in Maine – not to mention the best workforce - to achieve the goal of increasing our competitiveness and solidifying the health of this industry for years to come," said the Governor.

The Governor talked about the resources gathered at Paper Days. "Many of the people in this room have been working with the industry and my Administration on the critical research and development that will continue to transform the paper industry. There are opportunities here; we have to be aggressive in their pursuit."

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Governor Baldacci Surveys Storm Damage in Knox and Waldo Counties

April 8, 2009

LINCOLNVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Knox County and Waldo County for a firsthand account of damaged caused by a recent heavy rain storm Monday night. The Governor looked at roads in Camden, Hope and Lincolnville that suffered severe damage as a result of the storm. The Governor also met with town and Emergency Management Agency officials in each location.

"I am very proud of the work done by the local officials, the county Emergency Management Agencies, the Maine Department of Transportation and the residents here on the midcoast," Governor Baldacci said. "The most important thing is that nobody got hurt. At the same time, there is a lot of work to do in repairing these roads. The State is here to help, and through the Maine DOT will get the roads back in working order as soon as possible."

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Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff in Bridgton and Naples

April 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Andrew Quasnitschka, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Saturday, April 11, 2009 in the towns of Bridgton and Naples. Lance Cpl. Quasnitschka died last week in a car accident while off-duty. He had been a resident of Bridgton, and his memorial service will be held on Saturday at Lake Region High School in Naples.

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Governor Highlights Importance of Financial Literacy

April 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined the Institute for Financial Literacy and other organizations at the State House today to declare April 9, 2009, as Financial Literacy Day in Maine. The Governor said that in this time of economic uncertainty, Maine families and businesses are worried about their financial futures.

"Mainers want to provide security for their families and to see their communities healthy and strong," said the Governor. "In tough economic times, many are gripped by anxiety, by fear that the global recession that has impacted Maine jeopardizes their economic security. That is why it's more important than ever for Mainers to seek out information about how to manage their finances. Knowledge is power, and we are lucky that in the State of Maine and nationally there are people with a wealth of information who can lend a hand in understanding finances."

The Institute for Financial Literacy is a national nonprofit founded in Maine in 2002.

Other participating organizations in Financial Literacy Day at the State House include Maine Centers for Women, Work & Community, Maine Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Jobs for Maine's Graduates, MaineHousing, and the Harold Alfond College Challenge.

For more information on financial literacy education and the resources at the Institute for Financial Literacy, visit http://www.financiallit.org/

The text of the Proclamation for Financial Literacy Day follows.

WHEREAS, only 40% of Americans use a budget to keep track of their household finances; and

WHEREAS, more than 8 million Americans were victims of identity fraud in 2006; and

WHEREAS, two out of five Americans worries about excessive debt; and

WHEREAS, 47 million Americans are uninsured, a number that continues to rise; and

WHEREAS, 61% of households are "at risk" of being unable to live the way they would like and pay for their health care when they retire; and

WHEREAS, the Institute for Financial Literacy continues to work to improve the financial literacy of the residents of Maine,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2009 as

FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR MAINERS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor: Be Mindful of Scams Related to Recovery Act

April 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today warned Mainers to be wary of telephone calls or solicitations claiming to be related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Governor also announced today that the State has created a toll-free telephone number that allows people to report suspected cases of fraud, waste or abuse.

The Governor's Office received a telephone call today from a constituent who said she had been contacted the night before. The caller sought personal information from the woman, claiming they needed the information to deposit a large sum of Recovery Act funds into her personal account.

The Governor's Office is not conducting such outreach and would not request personal information or conduct direct financial transactions.

"It's disgusting that during such a difficult economic time, there are people who would try to take advantage of their neighbors," Governor Baldacci said. "The Recovery Act will create jobs and help our economy to grow. It's unfortunate that some unscrupulous people would try to use it as a cover for crime."

"Today, we have launched a new tool to help people fight waste, fraud and abuse," Governor Baldacci said. "Anyone who suspects that Recovery Act money is being misused can call the number and make a report. We will not tolerate misuse of Recovery Act funding or criminal activity."

The fraud hot line number is: 866-224-3033. The number is also published on the State's Recovery Web site: www.maine.gov/recovery

Similar incidents of attempted fraud have been reported around the country. The Small Business Administration put out a warning in February that someone had sent letters to businesses seeking bank account information purportedly for federal tax rebates related to the Recovery Act. No such letters were sent by the SBA.

"In this day in age, we all have to be careful," Governor Baldacci said. "Everyone should be very cautious about sharing personal and financial information."

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Governor Celebrates Economic Development Tool for Municipalities

April 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Commissioner John Richardson of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and officials from all 15 municipalities that are receiving Tax Increment Financing (TIF) designation.

"These are tough economic times, but these communities understand the need to invest in our economic future now," said the Governor. "The TIF designation will enable the 15 communities to finance 19 projects totaling $328 million."

Administered at the State level, the TIF program enables municipalities to make critical investments to spur economic development. Maine municipalities may redirect some or all of the new property taxes from an investment project within a designated district to assist in that project's financing.

"It's important to recognize that investments are being made – to empower our local communities to expand their economies," said the Governor. "These are valuable tools that the State and towns have to accomplish this goal.

The municipalities, along with the investment name and amount, are attached.

Municipality, Investment Name, Investment Amount

Augusta, Cony Circle, $ 9,200,000

Eliot, Route 236, $ 31,700,000

Eliot, Eliot Commons, $ 15,000,000

Gardiner, Area Wide Libby Hill, $ 6,300,000

Houlton, Downtown, $ 10,000,000

Lee, Rollins Wind Project, $ 25,000,000

Lewiston, Gendron Business Park Phase II, $ 54,000,000

Madawaska, Country Village Estates, $ 3,122,271

Oakfield, Oakfield Wind Project, $104,000,000

Pittsfield, Pittsfield Industrial Park Phase II, $ 4,000,000

Portland, McAuley Place, $ 25,192,250

Portland, Creative Portland Dev & Arts, $ 3,260,750

Presque Isle, BLD Hospitality, $ 9,725,000

Sanford, Sanford Institution for Savings, $ 3,650,000

Sanford, Rubb Inc, $ 1,400,000

Thomaston, Thomaston Green Downtown Revitalization, $ 12,000,000

Van Buren, Industrial Parks, $ 1,200,000

Van Buren, Downtown, $ 1,500,000

Winn, Rollins Wind Project, $ 8,000,000

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Governor Baldacci Honors Filmmakers and Troop Greeters

April 9, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci Thursday night honored the filmmakers associated with the production of "The Way We Get By." The documentary follows three Bangor-area residents who spend time as Troop Greeters at Bangor International Airport. The Governor gave the filmmakers a Special Recognition Award for Film and Public Service.

"This film highlights the Bangor Troop Greeters and the people of Maine in a very positive light," Governor Baldacci said. "I am proud of the work of the very talented filmmakers behind this movie have done, and I will forever be proud of the work of the Troop Greeters who are at the airport all hours of the night to greet soldiers as they are about to leave for duty, or are returning home. This film tells a great story that needs to be told."

Writer/director Aron Gaudet, producer Gita Pullapilly and co-director of photography Dan Ferrigan were at the Maine premiere. The three Mainers the film is centered around were also in attendance, Bill Knight, Joan Gaudet and Jerry Mundy.

In addition to presenting the filmmakers with a special recognition, Governor Baldacci also honored Bangor's Troop Greeters with a proclamation naming April 9, 2009, as Maine Troop Greeter Day.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the Maine Troop Greeters have welcomed more than 800,000 men and women of our Armed Forces as they make their way to and from deployment; and

WHEREAS, those men and women have been shown the warmth of the Maine people and have been provided with items to give them comfort during their brief stop; and

WHEREAS, this endeavor has been recognized across the nation by families and the public which brings great credit to the people of Maine; and

WHEREAS, filmmakers Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly have further recognized the good work of the greeters in their film The Way We Get By; and

WHEREAS, that film has been presented at the Austin Texas film festival further introducing the greeters to the country,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do herby proclaim April 9, 2009 as

MAINE TROOP GREETER DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to mark this observance.

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Maine Receives $19.5 Million in Recovery Funds for Drinking Water Improvements

April 10, 2009

TOPSHAM – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined regional U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) officials, U.S. Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and State and local officials at the Brunswick and Topsham Water District to announce Maine's latest receipt of federal Recovery Act funds. The $19.5 million for drinking water improvements will create needed jobs and make vital updates to drinking water systems across the State.

"The Recovery funds for drinking water, taken with other resources, will allow us to complete more than $40 million worth of projects in 61 communities," said the Governor. "It's projected that the $40 million the State will receive could create 720 to 960 jobs."

"This investment will create more jobs, and improve public health and safety, but it also promotes economic development," said Governor Baldacci. "Projects in Brewer, Portland, Camden-Rockland and Yarmouth are now out to bid. Several more communities will be bidding projects over the next two weeks."

Much of Maine's drinking water infrastructure is more than 100 years old. It needs work. This support will make a real difference for many communities. The improvements will also allow water systems to serve more customers, allowing for growth and greater economic development.

At the water treatment facility that serves the towns of Brunswick and Topsham, $663,000 will go to work for water treatment upgrades. Groundbreaking will occur no later than Aug. 1.

Federal EPA officials also announced that Maine is receiving $1.73 million from the Recovery Act's State Clean Diesel Grant Program. These funds will enable Maine to expand Maine's Clean School Bus program, repower marine engines which will reduce emissions by 70 percent, among other projects.

"We are pleased to work with the Obama Administration, our Maine Congressional Delegation and the Maine Legislature to ensure that federal Recovery Act funds have the desired impact of creating jobs and improving our health and infrastructure," said the Governor. "Nearby, Pike Industries has started work on a critical project to rebuild Interstate 295 between Topsham and Brunswick. The $31.4 million dollars project, funded by the Recovery Act, will create more than 800 jobs this spring, summer and fall."

Information on the water improvement projects can be found on the State Recovery Act Web site: www.MaineRecovery.gov

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Statement on the Passing of Ricky Gibson

April 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of Ricky Gibson, a sophomore at Maranacook High School who spearheaded a campaign starting with the Make-A-Wish Foundation to provide lights and bleachers for his school's football field.

"I was blessed to have had the opportunity to meet Ricky Gibson a couple of times over the past few months," Governor Baldacci said. "It was difficult not to be inspired by his drive, determination and love for life. He selflessly turned his wish from the Make-A-Wish Foundation into a wish for the town, and motivated an entire community in the process. Ricky got the most out of life, but he will be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with Ricky's family, friends and classmates during this difficult time."

Ricky Gibson was diagnosed in September of 2008 with diffused intrinsic pontine glioma, an inoperable brain tumor. After being approached by the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Maine, Ricky's wish was to give back through lights and bleachers for the football field at Maranacook High School. The Make-A-Wish Foundation provided the initial donation, after which additional donations came in from community members and other schools around the State.

After installation, the lights were lit by Ricky during a special celebration in December of last year.

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Governor Baldacci Surveys Storm Damage in Aroostook County;

April 11, 2009

MASARDIS and ASHLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Marsardis and Ashland in Aroostook County to see flood damage that has affected the area and meet with families whose homes were damaged.

The Governor was briefed by Aroostook Emergency Management Agency Director Vern Ouellette, Masardis Fire Chief Steve Sherman, Forest Service District Ranger Robert Gross and other local officials to discuss the situation.

"The magnitude of this flood is certainly not what we saw a year ago in Aroostook County," Governor Baldacci said. "But there are homes that have been destroyed, and folks without homes. We will do what we can to help, and they should know they are not alone."

Governor Baldacci met with the MacDonald and Carney families in Masardis. Both family homes were badly damaged and are currently uninhabitable.

"We're going to work with local officials and relief agencies to get these families some help immediately, and then to help them repair their homes or find a new place to live," Governor Baldacci said.

Aroostook EMA worked cooperatively with Maine's Department of Conservation to map and track damage in the area, using a new technology acquired through the Department of Homeland Security and Maine National Guard.

The Global Relief Technologies handheld data system allows personnel on the ground to link disaster information, photographs and coordinates via satellite immediately to other responders and headquarters. The real time information allows for a quicker, more precise response.

"This technology gives us an advantage as we work to respond to disasters around the State," Governor Baldacci said. "But as has always been the case, it is the cooperation among many people working together that helps to limit loss of life and property damage."

Governor Baldacci also visited the Ashland site of Northeast Pellets, which was recently destroyed by fire, and spoke with the mill's owner, Matthew Bell.

"Pellets are an important part of Maine's energy mix," Governor Baldacci said. "This mill provided good jobs and was helping us break our dependency on foreign oil. We will do what we can, working with our federal partners, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Finance Authority of Maine to get this business back on its feet and the employees back to work."

Earlier in the week the Governor visited Knox and Waldo Counties to survey damaged roads in Lincolnville, Hope and Camden. Northern Maine and Midcoast Maine were two of the hardest hit areas when heavy rains entered the State on Monday.

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Health Care Cost Driver Report Released

April 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Advisory Council on Health Systems Development, which was established under the 2003 Dirigo Health Reform Law to advise the Governor on health care issues, has released its report on what factors lead to Maine's high health care costs. The report was required by the Maine Legislature to report on cost drivers and provide recommendations to reduce Maine's health care spending.

The study noted that the United States spends twice as much as other developed countries on health care, but does not see a corresponding increase in health care quality or outcomes. Maine has the second-highest health care spending per person in the nation.

The Council found that high costs are multi-faceted, but are driven largely by chronic-illness and inefficient use of care. Specifically, thirty percent of private insurance premium costs in Maine are attributed to chronic illness, such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes. Further, national experts agree that roughly a third of health care spending is on inefficient care that does nothing to improve health. That is important because the Council also found that there is considerable variation in the efficiency of health care delivery across the State. The same person could be treated differently – in some places more efficiently and in some places less efficiently – depending on where they seek care.

The study also found that about 75 percent of Maine's emergency department use is avoidable. The Council noted that steering patients to less-costly routine office care would reduce unnecessary emergency room visits.

The recommendations of the Council focused on ways to reduce the key health care cost drivers. Prevention efforts and use of evidence-based public health strategies would aid in reducing chronic illness and resulting costs.

Expanding electronic medical records use is touted as providing better results and lowering costs. Maine is moving beyond a pilot project using HealthInfoNet to expand electronic medical record use. Full implementation of the network across the State is projected to save up to $52 million a year.

The Council suggests that a system-wide payment reform is needed to improve health care quality and reduce costs. A public-private pilot project is currently under way that includes the four largest private health insurers in the State. The pilot provides incentives for outcomes rather than volume of services, and relies on coordination of care and evidence-based practices.

The Governor has proposed addressing many of these issues and looks forward to reviewing the report. "The Advisory Council has given us a thorough review of the many complexities that exist in Maine's health care system," said the Governor. "Its recommendations will help policymakers as we continue to address the high cost of health care that threaten hardworking Maine families and businesses."

The full report with the complete set of recommendations and supporting material for the Cost Driver Report can be found at www.maine.gov/GOHPF

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Governor Calls for Review of Public Benefit Delivery

April 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an Executive Order to help ensure that hardworking families are able to access all the public supports available to them. The directive recognizes that the global recession is putting significant strains on many families. The work group would review ways to simplify and improve coordination of community and State systems offering assistance to such families. Recommendations to the Governor on options to better integrate and streamline eligibility and delivery of services are due by December 31, 2009.

"Families are struggling during this global recession," said the Governor. "During these tough economic times, it's more important than ever to thoroughly examine how State government can improve access and delivery of available assistance."

The work group will review new technology and scrutinize administrative procedures. In addition, the work group will examine opportunities to maximize federal funds available.

The text of the Executive Order follows.

29 FY 08/09

April 13, 2009

AN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RECOMMEND EFFICIENCIES AND SIMPLICIFICATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC BENEFITS TO HELP MAINE WEATHER THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

WHEREAS, the current national economic forecast predicts a continued downward spiral; and

WHEREAS, working hard no longer assures that a family will be able to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS the combination of rising prices for basic needs and falling incomes has many families in an economic vise; and

WHEREAS, nearly one-third of Maine's population is living in or near poverty and this number will likely increase due to the prevailing economic environment; and

WHEREAS, Maine's front line public benefit workers are overburdened by growing caseloads; and

WHEREAS, upgrading existing application and eligibility procedures for public benefit programs would remove burdensome and outdated processes and increase federal dollars flowing into the state; and

WHEREAS, new technology exists that would eliminate duplication of effort, reduce unnecessary obstacles, and consolidate eligibility data between programs; and

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WHEREAS, economic realities make it imperative to make the best use of new technologies and community partners; and

WHEREAS, one of the State of Maine's most important responsibilities and profound duties is to provide for the safety and security of all Maine people.

NOW THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services to convene a work group to offer solutions that will increase Maine's share of available federal dollars by identifying and accessing untapped federal resources and streamlining and upgrading the procedures and technology used to determine access to public benefits in the State of Maine, while assuring the integrity of those public benefit programs.

Purpose

In order to assist hard working families struggling in difficult economic times, the work group will convene a diverse group of individuals and organizations to identify and access federal dollars available to Maine to boost family resources and the State's economy. In addition, the work group will implement the necessary steps needed to update and coordinate community and statewide systems, including new technology to improve access, streamline administrative procedures and the delivery of services.

Membership

The work group shall be comprised of representatives from the following departments, agencies, consumer groups and community partners:

• The Commissioner of the DHHS or designee, who shall serve as Chair

• The Director of the Office of Integrated Access and Support or designee

• A representative from a municipal office responsible for the delivery of assistance to people in need and community health initiatives or designee

• A representative from an organization that represents the interests of seniors

• The Executive Director of the Disability Rights Center

• A representative of a statewide non-profit organization representing individuals with low income

• A representative from the Maine Community Action Association or designee

The work group may call on representatives from any government agency or other organization not otherwise represented on the work group to provide information or to participate fully in the work group when, in the work group's discretion, that representative has responsibilities or expertise in a particular area that would assist the work group in carrying out its duties.

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The work group shall meet at times and places called by the Chair. Members of the work group shall serve without compensation.

Duties

Consistent with the purpose of this Executive Order, the work group shall:

1) Identify and implement additional opportunities to take advantage of federal resources available to help Maine people weather these difficult economic times and serve as economic stimulus in Maine.

2) Update, simplify and integrate eligibility and delivery systems, including technology, in order to streamline and expedite the application process and delivery of benefits as well as consolidate and improve coordination of existing programs.

3) Facilitate coordination among departments, agencies and community partners to create multiple points of entry to improve access to benefits and tax credits and eliminate redundancy in the eligibility determination and delivery systems for public benefits.

By June 1, 2009, the work group shall develop a timeframe by which the initiatives described in the above duties shall be implemented. By December 31, 2009, the work group shall provide a report to the Governor detailing the progress of its work, recommendations to the Governor, and any outstanding issues that the group will continue to examine.

Implementation Costs

The costs for implementing the duties included in this Executive Order shall be absorbed by the participating State agencies.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is April 13, 2009.

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John E. Baldacci, Governor

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Governor Signs Bill to Help Laid-off Workers

April 16, 2009

AUGUSTA - Approximately 10,000 laid-off workers could benefit by the end of this year from legislation signed today by Governor John Baldacci after expedited consideration by the Maine Legislature. The measure makes changes to Maine unemployment law to allow the start of an Extended Benefit Program. This provides additional weeks of unemployment benefits to workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, are still unemployed, and have run out of other unemployment benefits.

Extended Benefits are paid in addition to up to 59 weeks of benefits already provided to workers who have lost their jobs (26 weeks of which are through Regular Unemployment Benefits and 33 weeks of which are through Emergency Unemployment Compensation Benefits). Extended Benefits provide up to 13 additional weeks of unemployment and are only payable after a worker runs out of all other unemployment benefits.

"This law gives that extra help to Mainers who need it most," said Governor Baldacci. "I want to thank the bipartisan leadership of the Maine Legislature for recognizing the importance of quick action on this important bill. Maine can now access additional federal funds made available through the Recovery Act. Estimates show that the total impact could be at least $24 million working through the Maine economy."

As many as 263 workers may be eligible for Extended Benefits now, and hundreds more will likely qualify within the next six weeks. The first payable week for Extended Benefits will be the week ending April 11. The program will remain in place until the end of this year.

"The national recession has created a very tough job market for Maine workers who have lost their jobs," said Maine Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. "Extended Benefits will help those laid-off workers who are struggling the hardest in our economy to find new jobs."

Workers do not need to apply for Extended Benefits. The Maine Department of Labor will send an information packet on Extended Benefits that will include detailed instructions for filing for and collecting these benefits as well as the weekly claim form to all workers potentially eligible for the program along with information on their maximum weekly benefit amount. Once eligibility for extended benefits is determined, additional information will be mailed out informing individuals of their weekly benefit amount and the total benefits they might potentially receive under this program.

Commissioner Fortman noted that there are some important differences in the new Extended Benefit program. Workers will need to do a much more stringent work search and will need to provide documentation of the work search before their weekly claim can be paid. Given the nature of the work search requirements, weekly claims for Extended Benefits must be filed on paper each week. The weekly claim form can be mailed or faxed to a specific unit being set up to process these payments in Augusta.

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The Commissioner also reminded workers that Maine CareerCenters are the best resources for people needing help with their job search. The CareerCenter Job Bank, which was launched in November, has registered close to 100,000 workers to date. The service is available from any computer connected to the internet and allows workers to search for jobs by region, occupation, or wage.

CareerCenters also assist jobseekers with career and education planning and host a variety of workshops on different employment topics. Veterans' representatives are available to provide counseling on programs and benefits available to qualified veterans. Specialized employment services are also provided to assist people with disabilities in finding or keeping a job.

Provisions in the federal Recovery Act pays for 100 percent of the cost of Extended Benefits for most workers. The Governor's legislation made technical changes in Maine Unemployment Law to allow the program to start this month.

For more information on the Extended Benefit program and other unemployment benefits for workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own, visit www.fileforui.com

For more information on the Recovery Act and its impact on Maine, visit www.MaineRecovery.gov

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Governor Honors Maine Companies and Nonprofits with Awards for Excellence

April 17, 2009

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci presented the 2009 Governor's Award for Business Excellence today to six companies. In addition, six nonprofits received the Dirigo Awards for Nonprofit Excellence. The awards were presented as part of the Colby Institute for Leadership annual luncheon at Colby College.

The Governor's Award for Business Excellence was presented to GHM Agency of Waterville; Hallowell International of Bangor; Hammond Tractor Co. of Fairfield, Jotul North America of Gorham; Lie-Nielsen Toolworks Inc. of Warren; and Nason Mechanical Services of Auburn.

The Dirigo Awards for Nonprofit Excellence were presented to Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Portland; Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Portland; Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, Bangor; Sustainable Harvest International, Surry; Maine Farmland Trust, Belfast; and The Telling Room, Portland.

"This year's honorees represent the innovative spirit that has earned Maine a reputation for top-quality workmanship, service and a commitment to excellence," said Governor Baldacci. "Each company and nonprofit selected has a strong record of community service and investment in its workforce. They are all distinguished members of our community. There's a lot that businesses and nonprofits can learn from each other, and we know that it will take all of us working together to help support our communities during this global recession."

The business award is administered by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and sponsored by FairPoint Communications. The award recognizes Maine companies that demonstrate a high level of commitment to their community, employees, and to manufacturing or service excellence. The nonprofit awards are sponsored by the Maine Association of Nonprofits and honor organizations that have achieved results through demonstrating sound management practices and ingenuity.

John Richardson, Commissioner of DECD, said of the business awards, "All of these companies exemplify what it means to have an excellent attitude towards doing business in Maine. I want to extend my thanks to them and to FairPoint Communications for sponsoring this prestigious award ceremony."

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Governor Baldacci Announces Winners of 2009 Governor's Service Awards

April 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci handed out eight awards today for volunteer efforts at the 2009 Governor's Service Awards. This is the 21st year of the Governor's Service Awards. They were created in an effort to celebrate and recognize the exemplary work of Maine's volunteer community.

"Each of you here today sets the standard for the rest of us when it comes to getting involved," Governor Baldacci said. "You are an inspiration, and I commend you for your dedication to Maine people and communities. You get things done not once a year, but every day."

The awards were presented as follows:

Volunteer of the Year: Heidi Bowden of Augusta

National Service Volunteer Award: Jenni Ricci - Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland

Outstanding Public Sector Volunteer: Jackie Ayotte - Long Lake Public Library

Excellence in Volunteer Administration: Steven Hurd - Togus Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta

Youth Volunteer of the Year: James Knight - The Game Loft in Belfast

Corporate Volunteerism Award: Hannaford

Small Business Volunteerism Award: Bayside Supermarket, Milbridge

Outstanding Non-Profit Award: Trekkers

In addition to the eight award winners, the Governor also awarded nearly 50 Exemplary Service Awards to nominees who did not receive an award in the category in which they were nominated, but whose service deserved to be highlighted.

"Maine's volunteer force is more than 350,000 strong," the Governor said. "Maine has the second highest rate of volunteering among Northeastern States. Our volunteers help keep Maine citizens safe and warm in their homes, mentor children, and work to preserve the natural beauty of Maine. In short, they help to make Maine the special place that it is."

At a separate afternoon ceremony at the Maine State Museum, more than 350 recipients of the Roll of Honor were recognized by the Governor for contributing 500 or more hours of documented service to their communities during the course of 12 months.

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Governor Issues Statement on Earth Day

April 22, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today issued the following statement recognizing Earth Day.

"Maine has led the way in preserving our environment and pursuing clean, sustainable energy, which saves money, reduces harmful pollutants and our dependence on foreign oil, and helps the Maine economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Our natural resources are part of the unique quality of life that make Maine special and that are critical to our physical and economic health."

"As proud as I am of the leadership role Maine has undertaken in this area, we must not lose our sense of purpose. The University of Maine's Climate Change Institute recently produced a report on the effects of greenhouse gas and other pollutants on Maine's climate. The report clearly shows the need to continue our efforts to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels."

Early in the Governor's Administration he established the Office of Energy Independence and Security. Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources. The State is part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, an innovative regional approach to reducing carbon emissions. Governor Baldacci's energy initiatives include weatherizing Maine homes and businesses and investing in diverse, renewable energy resources to build our portfolio of clean, renewable energy.

"Long-term energy conservation and alternative energy solutions – as well as continuing sound environmental policies - will improve Maine's quality of life while contributing to energy security and growing green jobs," said Governor Baldacci.

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Governor Honors Alzheimer's Volunteers

April 22, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today honored volunteers of the Maine Alzheimer's Association at a reception at the Blaine House. The Maine Alzheimer's Association serves all of Maine and about 37,000 families in the State who are directly affected by Alzheimer's Disease.

"The people here today provide invaluable resources, support and advocacy, as well as education about this debilitating disease," Governor Baldacci said. "I commend you for your dedication to Maine people and communities, and for fighting this terrible disease."

The Maine Alzheimer's Association was founded in 1987 by Marilyn Paige, who was at the reception this afternoon. A volunteerism award, named for Paige, is given annually to the individual who best exemplifies the spirit of selfless dedication to the cause of improving the lives of individuals with Alzheimer's and their families by contributing their time, energy, and talents to the Association. Governor Baldacci presented the Marilyn Paige Award for Volunteerism to Toni Butterfield of Falmouth for her volunteer efforts with the Association.

The Maine Alzheimer's Association provides information and support to persons with Alzheimer's Disease, their families and caregivers; educates the public and professionals about Alzheimer's Disease; advocates on behalf of people with Alzheimer's Disease; and supports research into its treatment, care, cause and prevention.

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Governor Baldacci Announces Completion of Seboeis Lake Project

April 24, 2009

Land for Maine's Future funds used to purchase more than 2,400 acres

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the completion of Seboeis Lake conservation project. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit conservation organization with an office in Portland, has completed the transfer of 2,434 acres at Seboeis Lake from Bayroot LLC to the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. The Governor joined Legislators, conservation groups and local and federal officials at the State House ceremony to celebrate the major step forward in permanently protecting the prime recreational landscape between Milo and Millinocket.

"Seboeis Lake is a shining example of how protecting Maine's special places is linked to our economic vitality," said Governor Baldacci. "With the help of our Land for Maine's Future program, we are guaranteeing permanent public access for all traditional outdoor activities, we're bolstering the tourist economy in the Millinocket region, and we're preserving a treasured resource."

The new acquisition includes 12 miles of frontage on Seboeis Lake and Northwest Pond and another 4.8 miles of island shoreline. The 2,434 acres will be added to the existing Seboeis Unit, building on an earlier Land for Maine's Future-funded acquisition at the south end of Seboeis Lake. With this addition, 95 percent of the Seboeis Lake shoreline now is permanently protected for public access and closed to private development.

The new acquisition includes guaranteed public access to approximately five miles of Interconnected Trail System (ITS) Connector Trail 111, which links two major north-south snowmobile routes between the Brownville area and Millinocket.

Patrick McGowan, Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, said, "Seboeis is a great piece of land cherished by the local community and ideal for camping, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting and ATV riding. This is one of the reasons why Land for Maine's Future has been so successful in all 16 of Maine's counties, because it conserves great land that people love and treasure. This acquisition is tied very tightly to the local community. It is a wonderful addition to the public ownership in this region of Maine."

"Today we have come very close to the goal of making the entire Seboeis Lake area a public asset, a place that can never be closed off," Sam Hodder, TPL's outgoing Maine director, said. "Once again, Governor Baldacci and the Legislature have shown their commitment, through their support of the Land for Maine's Future program, to investing in our natural resources. It will pay dividends today in spectacular opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, and opportunities for the local communities to earn tourism dollars, but it is also a legacy for future generations."

The $2.4 million purchase was made possible by funds from three sources:

• a grant of $897,000 from the Land for Maine's Future program;

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• $503,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants Program; and

• $1 million from the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

The Seboeis Lake protection effort is part of the larger Katahdin Forest Expansion (KFE) project, which aims to protect key resources and ensure public recreational access near Millinocket and east of Baxter State Park. The KFE project is proposed as Maine's top priority for funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Legacy Program and is strongly supported by U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Congressman Michael Michaud.

Seboeis Lake offers clear waters, scenic vistas which include Mt. Katahdin, and many opportunities for camping, fishing, canoeing, and wildlife viewing. It has the largest population of nesting loons on any lake in northern Maine except Moosehead. The shores of Northwest Pond, in the newly-acquired area, offer some of the finest moose-watching in the entire region.

Recreational opportunities in the Seboeis Lake Unit will include hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and ATV riding, as well as backcountry hiking and camping.

Gene Conlogue, Millinocket Town Manager, said, "The Seboeis purchase is part of a larger package in the Millinocket area that was negotiated one-and-a-half years ago. This is a major step toward realizing completion of the total deal that includes several parcels of land north of Millinocket owned by Roxanne Quimby. It will add to the assurance that current multi-use trails and other recreational uses will be protected while allowing for more to be constructed in the future. This area of the state prides itself on being a working forest that also provides abundant recreational opportunities and we want that to continue."

Bob Meyers, Executive Director of the Maine Snowmobile Association, said, "We're pleased that the first goal of a multi-part conservation plan for the Katahdin Region has been reached. We're looking forward to the completion of the entire plan, which will permanently ensure access for traditional uses in the region. Each step in this process helps to ensure the economic vitality of one of Maine's most important centers of outdoor recreation."

"The Land for Maine's Future Board has been committed to this area for many years," George Lapointe, the chair of the Land for Maine's Future Board, said. "This is a sound investment that protects Maine's heritage as well as the foundation of a healthy economic future for our citizens, especially in the hard-hit rural areas of the State."

The Trust for Public Land, established in 1972, specializes in conservation real estate, applying its expertise in negotiations, public finance, and law to protect land for people to enjoy as parks, greenways, community gardens, urban playgrounds, and wilderness. In Maine, TPL has protected more than 111,000 acres with projects ranging from city parks and pathways to coastal habitat and working farms and forests.

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The Land for Maine's Future Program was created in 1987 in response to concerns over the loss of critical natural areas and wildlife habitat along with traditional access to undeveloped lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. To date, the Land for Maine's Future Program has protected over 490,000 acres of Maine's best recreational and natural areas. The Program also seeks to protect farmlands through the purchase of development rights and public access to water for fishing boating and commercial marine activities. A series of previous bond issues, overwhelmingly approved by Maine voters, provides funding for these projects. However, with the exception of limited funding remains available for boat launch sites, all funding for farm and conservation has been committed. The Legislature is currently considering proposals to replenish the program, including the Governor's proposed bond package.

For more information, go to: http://www.maine.gov/spo/lmf

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Rename Part of Route 16

April 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 111, Resolve, To Name Part of Route 16 in Kingsbury Plantation the Alton E. Worcester Highway. Rep. Peter Johnson (R-Greenville) sponsored the legislation, which was passed last month.

"This resolve honors a true Maine patriot and valued citizen, Alton Worcester," Governor Baldacci said. "The memory of Alton and all that he meant to his family, friends, community and State is strong. He made great contributions to Kingsbury Plantation and to all of Maine."

Worcester served 20 years in the United States Air Force and 27 years as First Assessor of Kingsbury Plantation. He also worked as a blueberry farmer in the plantation for 28 years and was well-known throughout in the area.

Members of the Worcester family were present for the ceremonial signing, including his widow Lois Worcester, and his children Alton Worcester Jr., and Rita Worcester. Co-sponsors of the legislation and local officials were also at the ceremony.

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Governor Baldacci Recognizes Business Environmental Leaders

April 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner David Littell Friday to recognize five Maine companies for participating in the department's voluntary "Environmental Leaders of Maine: Smart Growth through Smart Production" program. The program provides a blueprint for businesses to follow to exceed environmental compliance standards and to become mentors in the business community.

"You are proving that Maine can become more energy independent, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants, and reduce the use of toxic chemicals – at the same time we grow green jobs and the Maine economy," Governor Baldacci said. "From energy efficiency and onshore wind to offshore tidal, wind and wave, these are exciting times that will lead to a cleaner and more secure energy future in Maine."

Bath Iron Works and Lyman-Morse Boatbuilding Company Inc. of Thomaston signed agreements today to participate in the program.

The four businesses honored for meeting their goals through the program were Lyman-Morse Boatbuilding Company Inc., Poland Spring Bottling, NorDx Laboratory of Scarborough, and Wright Ryan Construction of Portland.

Other companies participating in the program who were not at the ceremony today include Evonik Cyro LLC of Sanford, Fairchild Semiconductor of South Portland, Moss Inc. of Belfast, National Semiconductor of South Portland, and Pratt & Whitney of North Berwick.

For more information about the Environmental Leaders of Maine program,
visit http://www.maine.gov/dep/innovation/elm/

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Simple Steps Can Reduce Spread of Swine Flu; No Confirmed Cases in Maine

April 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – In response to confirmed cases of people infected with swine influenza (swine flu) in several states and Mexico, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services has been working closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to increase tracking of influenza in Maine, including swine flu, and to make preparations to minimize its impact.

"We have seen a decrease in seasonal influenza in Maine these past few weeks, and have not detected any swine flu yet," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine CDC. "However, with this outbreak spreading, it is likely we will see it in Maine. Our goal is to minimize its impact."

So far, there have been no fatalities associated with swine flu in the United States.

"Everyone has an important role in making sure swine flu has a minimal impact in Maine. We can all be vigilant in practicing respiratory hygiene," Mills said.

These strategies include:
• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.• Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. • Try to avoid close contact with sick people. • If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

People returning from visiting areas with confirmed swine flu, such as Mexico, Southern California, Southern Texas and more areas as added by CDC, should pay close attention to their health for seven days.

"If you become sick with the symptoms of swine flu during this period, you should call your health care provider with the information about your symptoms and where you traveled," Mills said.

Mills will hold a media availability at 11 a.m. Monday at Maine CDC, 286 Water Street, Key Plaza, 8th Floor, in Augusta.

The symptoms of swine flu in people appear to be similar to the symptoms of regular human influenza and include fever with cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Governor John E. Baldacci has been briefed on the situation and is tracking developments through the Maine CDC.

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"While there are no confirmed cases of the swine flu in Maine, we are taking precautions to ensure that we can quickly identify and track any outbreak," Governor Baldacci said. "It's important to remember that a few simple steps, like washing your hands or staying home if your ill, can make a real difference in helping to stop the spread of the flu."

Maine has been working closely with the federal government and other public health officials in New England on strategies for detecting and tracking cases of the swine flu and on potential responses. For facts about influenza, and more information about swine flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov;
or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

Swine flu is a respiratory infection caused by influenza type A viruses that regularly cause outbreaks of influenza in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can occur. Human cases typically involve people who have had direct contact with pigs, but person-to-person transmission is suspected among recent cases in the U.S. The infected people in Mexico have had a high fatality rate, but the recent cases from California and Texas have been mild. Swine influenza cannot be transmitted from eating pork or pork products.

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H1N1 (Swine Flu) Probable Cases Confirmed in Maine

April 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Maine Center for Disease Control Director Dr. Dora Anne Mills discussed the steps that are being taken to minimize the impact of the H1N1 (swine) flu in Maine at a State House Press Conference today.

On Wednesday morning, three cases of H1N1 (swine flu) were confirmed in Maine. All three people are adults and a recovering in their homes. Two are from Kennebec County and one resides in York County.

"It is important for the citizens of Maine to prepare for this as they would any other emergency situation,'' the Governor said. "We have weathered storms before, whether it be an ice storm, or a blizzard. There are important steps we can all take to minimize the impact of this virus."

Governor Baldacci urged Mainers to become familiar with the information made available by the State and Federal Centers for Disease Control. Personal checklists are available at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?scid=swineFluoutbreak_003

Antiviral medication is arriving from a federal stockpile later this week. In addition, the Governor has authorized the purchase of $2.175 million of antivirals, which will provide Maine with the maximum amount of coverage if H1NI spreads.

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for citizens to practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.

• Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

• If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

"If you become sick with the symptoms of swine flu during this period, you should call your health care provider with the information about your symptoms and where you traveled," Mills said.

The Governor has planned a meeting later today with the Emergency Response Team and members of the Cabinet to discuss the latest information available.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov
or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

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U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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One Maine school, one day care in York County closed due to H1N1 flu

April 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci, in conjunction with Education Commission Susan A. Gendron, Dr. Dora Anne Mills, director of the Maine CDC and local education officials, announced Wednesday night the closure of Kennebunk Elementary School and the Crayon Academy day care center in Arundel due to two children with suspected H1N1 influenza ("swine flu"). Both are in York County.

In addition, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order declaring a Civil Emergency that will allow the State to better respond to the emerging threat posed by H1N1 flu.

"This is a serious situation," Governor Baldacci said. "We are taking these precautions to slow the spread of the flu and to make sure Maine can respond quickly and efficiently."

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention worked in conjunction with the Maine Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, following guidelines set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) and informed the superintendent and the day care provider Wednesday evening after information about the suspected infection became known.

The two children have symptoms consistent with H1N1 and are a household contact with a person identified with H1N1 infection. Earlier on Wednesday, the Maine CDC announced that three adults in Maine had been identified with H1N1 infection.

According to the guidelines, the schools and day care will be closed for seven calendar days. Parents are advised to keep their children home.

If the children exhibit symptoms such as fever and respiratory symptoms, parents should bring their children to a medical professional to be examined. If their children exhibit none of those symptoms and feel well, parents should monitor their children for signs, but do not need to take action.

Education Commissioner Susan A. Gendron praised local school officials and the owner of the day care for taking quick action to ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff. She said the Department of Education continues to take the lead of the Maine CDC on all public health decisions, and that there are no other schools that are being considered for closure at this time, and that those recommendations would be made by Dr. Mills.

Guidance and information are evolving rapidly as the virus and its patterns are studied nationally.

Commissioner Gendron held a conference call with superintendents on Wednesday afternoon to inform them of the US CDC guidance on school closures. According to the guidance, the procedure we will be following in Maine is as follows:• In the event that Maine CDC becomes aware of a confirmed or probable case of swine flu in a public school student, Maine CDC or the Department of Education will contact the superintendent of the school in order to close the school and send students and staff home.

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If a sibling of the affected student is in another school, that school should also be closed. Where buses have been used to transport students to multiple schools, all affected schools should be closed.• Dr. Mills will provide guidance on how long the school will remain closed and provide other support. Current guidance is for a closure to be for seven calendar days. • All superintendents should have plans in place to quickly arrange for school closure in the event that a case is confirmed, or considered probable, in one of his or her schools. • Schools have activated their pandemic flu plans. Most school systems have plans in place that were created in the past few years. Also, more than 120 school nurses in the State have participated in pandemic flu training over the past two years in conjunction with the Maine Department of Education. More information for school officials and parents on pandemic influenza planning can be found by visiting the Maine Department of Education web site: www.maine.gov/education/swineflu.html. Dr. Mills reminded parents, teachers and others that the best of all defenses continues to be respiratory hygiene and increased education efforts in the school community (and all communities):• Cover your coughs and sneezes. • Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. • Wash hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing. • Stay home if you are sick, especially with a fever. Industrial hygiene should also be stepped up to include cleaning of surfaces, particularly public water fountains and bathrooms. The Maine Department of Education planned to post guidance on industrial hygiene on its H1N1 web page by Thursday morning.

Governor Baldacci urged school officials, parents and community members to stay informed about developments since this event is rapidly changing and resulting guidance is as well. There are a number of resources available for parents and the community, starting with their local school nurse. More information is available to parents and community members by calling the Maine CDC's toll-free flu hot line: 1-888-257-0990 during extended business hours.

The Maine Department of Education is maintaining a Web page for school officials, parents and the school community at: www.maine.gov/education. The US CDC's Web site has updated national information and guidance, and can be found at: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ .

Maine CDC's website has updated Maine-specific information, including daily updates, as well as links to federal information: www.mainepublichealth.gov.

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Governor Unveils HealthCost Web Site

April 30, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today unveiled the Maine Health Data Organization Web site, "Maine HealthCost," which provides important health care cost information. The site enables the public to access information on prices at Maine hospitals and other health care facilities. Governor Baldacci hailed the new tool as a critical step of Dirigo Health Reform, a key aim of which is to help patients and employers make more informed health care decisions.

"In 2003, Dirigo Health Reform took the first step toward greater health care transparency, including a requirement for price posting," said the Governor. "HealthCost takes the next big step. The Web site empowers Mainers as they seek to better understand their health care and health insurance."

Specifically, HealthCost allows people to enter their insurance plans and find out what the estimated total payment is for select services at hospitals and other health care facilities across Maine. Patients can see the cost of a procedure at all providers anywhere in the state. The actual cost to patients could vary based on a patient's status (e.g. how sick he or she is), but the site provides a useful reference point that patients can use to determine out-of-pocket costs.

The public and policymakers have increasingly expressed interest in the information provided by HealthCost as patient deductibles and co-payments have increased. Transparency about health costs and quality helps employers and patients make informed choices about the care they cover and receive.

The Web site provides payments for Medicare and for all commercial health plans in the State. It does not yet provide estimates for MaineCare. Statewide, of those with health insurance coverage, Medicare pays for 43 percent, MaineCare 15 percent and 41 percent by private payers.

HealthCost also provides estimates of what the uninsured will be asked to pay. Because uninsured do not have insurance companies to negotiate discounts on their behalf, they are billed at full price. The site links to the Maine Hospital Association list of each hospital's free care guidelines.

"One question that emerges from the data is why costs vary. There are many reasons but we know that there is considerable, unwarranted variation in how health care is delivered and that affects costs," said Riley. This variation and its impact on health care costs were recently highlighted by the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development, the panel established by Dirigo Health Reform to advise the Governor and the Legislature. The study shows that reducing unwarranted variation across the State could save $300 million to $400 million a year.

Governor Baldacci praised the Maine Health Data Organization and their Board for providing this new tool.

"This data shows us how important it is to redouble our efforts to reduce health care costs for all Mainers," said the Governor. "I look forward to working with Maine's hospitals, Dirigo's Maine Quality Forum, our Advisory Council on Health Systems Development, the Legislature and others to identify and

reduce costs. We share the goal of increasing the affordability and quality of health care and making Maine the healthiest State in the nation."

The Governor noted that while costs are important, consumers should also be mindful of quality of care. The Maine Quality Forum, a division of Dirigo Health, provides information to help consumers choose health care providers and hospitals. The HealthCost Web site links to the Maine Quality Forum Web site.

The Maine HealthCost Web site is located at http://www.healthweb.maine.gov/

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H1N1 Case Identified In Penobscot County

April 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention has identified a youth from Penobscot County as having the H1N1 flu.

Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the Maine CDC, said that since the youth has not attended school in nearly two weeks, U.S. CDC recommends the school may remain open. Commissioner of Education Susan Gendron and state health officials discussed the situation with public schools officials today.

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation.

"Suspicious" cases involve individuals who, through a combination of factors, are considered to have H1N1 but no final conclusion has been reached through testing.

Maine CDC has found: one adult in Kennebec County who has H1N1, one adult in York County and one child in Penobscot County.

In addition, two children in York County are being treated as "suspicious" cases. They display symptoms of the flu and have had household contact with an adult with the flu. Following U.S. CDC guidelines, these cases lead to the closing of a school and day care in York County.

A second person in Kennebec County initially tested positive for H1N1 on Wednesday. A follow-up test revealed that the person does not have the H1N1 flu, but instead seasonal flu.

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.

• Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

• If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

"If you have traveled to areas of the country with influenza and become sick with a fever and respiratory symptoms within seven days of returning, you should call your health care provider with the information about your symptoms and where you traveled," Mills said.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

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Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov

http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Establish Native American Veterans Day

April 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 30, An Act To Establish Native American Veterans Day. The new law states that the Governor will annually issue a proclamation designating June 21 as Native American Veterans Day in remembrance of the courage and dedicated service of Native American members of the United States Armed Forces.

"Our troops, past and present, represent the best of Maine and our nation," Governor Baldacci said. "For our Native American members – whether it be through service in the National Guard, Armed Forces, or Reserves – it is vital that they know that everyone in Maine appreciates their service and sacrifices. I thank Maine's proud Native American soldiers and their families."

Governor Baldacci originally proclaimed June 6, 2007, as Native American Veterans History Day. For a proclamation to be issued annually by the Governor, it must be set in statute through legislative action. The bill that was ceremonially signed by the Governor today is the first of its kind in the nation, recognizing Native American veterans statewide on an annual basis.

Bill sponsor Rep. Donald Soctomah (Passamaquoddy Tribe) attended the ceremonial signing, as did several co-sponsors and supporters, including representatives from the Sons of the American Revolution.

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Governor Baldacci Presents Plan to Close $569 Million Budget Gap

May 1, 2009

Plan Calls for Shared Sacrifice While Protecting Economy and State's Most Vulnerable

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his plan to close a $569 million budget gap created by declining revenues.

"The global recession continues to have a sharp impact on Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "The plan I'm presenting includes many difficult decisions. It requires shared sacrifice across the State. But I also believe the plan is reasonable and fair."

The plan closes a $129 million budget gap for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, and a $440 million gap in fiscal years 2010-11.

In January, Governor Baldacci presented a budget plan that reduced General Fund spending for the two-year budget from $6.3 billion in 2008-09 to $6.1 billion for 2010-11.

With the current proposed revisions, the General Fund budget will be reduced to $5.8 billion.

"As our State works its way through the worst recession since the Great Depression, it's important that we all remain focused on our shared objectives – to protect and grow our economy, and protect our most vulnerable neighbors," Governor Baldacci said.

Reductions touch all areas of State government, including:

• Increased health insurance cost sharing for new State employees;

• Elimination of planned merit increases;

• 12 government shutdown days per year in 2010 and 2011; and

• Creation of a Commission to Recommend Streamlining of State Programs and Services.

The plan also reduces funding for:

• K-12 and higher education;

• The Department of Health and Human Services;

• The Homestead Exemption program;

• The Circuit Breaker program;

• Municipal Revenue Sharing; and

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• The Milk Subsidy, by capping the amount available.

In addition, the plan relies upon $75.5 million from the Budget Stabilization Fund in 2009 and 2010 and $40.6 million from the State's Working Capital Fund. Taken together, the two funds represent the State's reserves.

The plan also redirects American Recovery and Reinvestment Act resources originally proposed for other uses. Initiatives to expand health insurance coverage for laid-off workers and to invest in Health Info Net will be eliminated.

"The Recovery Act has given us a great opportunity to put people to work in Maine. Already, we're seeing construction crews on the job," Governor Baldacci said. "The federal support will also help us avoid unbearably deep cuts in the services that State government provides, including public safety, health care and education. Things are diffficult, but they would have been much worse. Jobs have been saved and vital services have been protected. There are no additional layoffs in this proposal."

The budget plan maintains support for a pilot program to change the delivery of primary care to make it more patient-centered, medical scholarships and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, as proposed in the Governor's original plan for Recovery Act investments. In addition, the proposal invests $2 million to fund the construction of an Educare pilot project in Waterville. The investment is matched by more than $6 million in private dollars to build this innovative center.

"Even during bad economic times, we must continue to invest for the future. These modest programs will have a lasting and outsized positive impact for our State," Governor Baldacci said.

Additionally, the plan makes adjustments to the tax code, including increased enforcement, a tax amnesty program, a freeze of indexing for individual income tax brackets and the standard deduction. Maine's standard deduction and individual income tax brackets will remain unchanged from current law.

"This budget makes serious and difficult reductions, and continues efforts to streamline and reduce the size of State government," Governor Baldacci said. "We face unprecedented economic times, and I am proposing ideas that we would all like to avoid. But if we make the tough decisions today, we will be better prepared for recovery when it comes."

For more information, visit the Governor's finance page at http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/finances.html

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H1N1 Flu Cases Increase to Six Statewide;Day Care Center in York County Cleared to Re-Open; Kennebunk Elementary Remains Closed

May 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention has identified today three additional individuals as having the H1N1 flu, bringing the State total to six.

Two adults, one in Kennebec County and one in York County have H1N1. A youth in York County also has the flu. The youth is one of two children in York who earlier in the week had been described as "suspicious" cases. The second youth in York County who had been described as "suspicious" did not test positive for H1N1.

Totals as of Friday, May 1: two adults in Kennebec County, two adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All are recovering.

"As we see more individuals with H1N1, the actual number of probable cases will become less important," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We know the flu is in Maine and our priority is to slow its transmission and to treat those who are ill."

In addition, Maine CDC continues to closely monitor guidance for mitigating the spread of H1N1 that is being developed by the U.S. CDC.

According to current guidance, which was updated on May 1, Kennebunk Elementary School will remain closed for at least seven calendar days. The length of closure could grow to 14 days as U.S. CDC revises its guidance. That guidance is being reviewed this weekend. The youth with H1N1 in York County is a student at the school.

The Crayon Academy day care center is cleared to re-open for normal operations on Monday. The youth from the center has tested negative for H1N1. While the day care center can re-open, the child attendee will not return until cleared.

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation.

"Suspicious" cases involve individuals who, through a combination of factors, are considered to have H1N1 but no final conclusion has been reached through testing.

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve. • Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. • Try to avoid close contact with sick people. • If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources: Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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Antiviral Supplies from U.S. CDC Begin Arriving in Maine

May 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – The first shipments of antiviral drugs and protective equipment released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began arriving in Maine early today.

The materials were distributed by the Maine National Guard to nine regional medical facilities around the State, which will distribute the supplies to other hospitals as needed. According to U.S. CDC directives, the antiviral drugs received today are intended to treat only persons considered seriously ill and who are hospitalized.

The shipments included antiviral drugs, protective masks, gloves and other medical equipment.

On Wednesday, April 29, Maine ordered a significant stockpile of antiviral drugs. Those shipments will begin arriving in the State as early as Tuesday, May 5.

"So far, the symptoms associated with the influenza H1N1 virus have been mild in Maine," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "As more people become infected with the virus, we could see a broader range of symptoms. The steps we are taking will help ensure that we have appropriate treatments on hand. Our top priority is to keep our people safe and to slow the spread of H1N1."

There is no vaccine for the H1N1 influenza. U.S. CDC reports that a vaccine is currently being produced and may be available this fall. Antiviral drugs do not create immunity or cure the disease, but they do slow the spread of the disease and lessen symptoms.

No new individuals have been identified with H1N1 since Friday.

Totals as of Saturday, May 2: two adults in Kennebec County, two adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All are recovering.

"As we see more individuals with H1N1, the actual number of probable cases will become less important," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We know the H1N1 influenza is in Maine and our priority is to slow its transmission and to treat those who may become seriously ill with it."

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve. • Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. • Try to avoid close contact with sick people. • If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources: Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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Seventh Case of H1N1 Influenza Identified

May 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention today has identified a new adult in York County as having the H1N1 influenza, bringing the State total to seven.

Totals as of Sunday, May 3: Two adults in Kennebec County, three adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All are recovering.

"We are continuing to examine the specific facts around these cases," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the Maine CDC. "None of the individuals have been hospitalized and all are recovering. Our goal remains to slow the spread of H1N1 influenza and to protect public health."

In addition, Maine CDC continues to closely monitor guidance for mitigating the spread of H1N1 that is being developed by the U.S. CDC.

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation. As the number of cases increases, U.S. CDC is unlikely to verify every occurrence of the H1N1 virus.

The antiviral drugs and protective equipment released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from the national stockpile arrived in Maine on Saturday.

The materials were distributed by the Maine National Guard to nine regional medical facilities around the State, which will distribute the supplies to other hospitals as needed. According to U.S. CDC directives, the antiviral drugs received on Saturday are intended to treat only persons considered seriously ill and who are hospitalized.

In total, the State received 50,000 treatment courses of the antivirals Relenza and Tamiflu from the national stockpile. The shipments also included protective masks, gloves and other medical equipment.

On Wednesday, April 29, Maine ordered a significant stockpile of antiviral drugs. Those shipments will begin arriving in the State as early as Tuesday, May 5.

There is no vaccine for the H1N1 influenza. U.S. CDC reports that a vaccine is currently being produced and may be available this fall. Antiviral drugs do not create immunity or cure the disease, but they do slow the spread of the disease and lessen symptoms.

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve. • Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. • Try to avoid

close contact with sick people. • If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources: Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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ConnectME Authority Announces Third Round of Broadband Expansion Grants

May 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and the ConnectME Authority recently announced the third grant round of the broadband expansion funding program. The Authority is looking for creative solutions for expanding affordable broadband service to the unserved areas of Maine.

More than $1 million is expected to be available. The grants will continue to be targeted to areas of the State that have no form of broadband or terrestrial high-speed Internet service available. Eligible applicants are municipalities, co-ops, community groups and broadband service providers.

"My Administration and the Maine State Legislature recognize the importance of making broadband services available throughout our entire State," said Governor Baldacci. "Future economic opportunities depend on our ability to have these services affordable and available to all residents of Maine. While many providers have made great strides in most parts of the State, we must seek ways to encourage development in all of our unserved areas."

For this round, the Authority is requesting smaller, more focused proposals than in previous grant rounds, with a suggested grant limit for each project of $100,000, funding no more than 50 percent of the total project, while recognizing the need for flexibility for exceptional proposals.

Legislation creating the ConnectME Authority provides for funding from a 0.25 percent surcharge on instate communications services. Due to the limited funding, interested applicants are asked to submit brief, pre-application letters describing a project or projects by June 1, 2009. These letters will be shared with existing or incumbent broadband service providers for review, serving two purposes: first, to ensure that the area proposed to be served by the proposed project is an unserved area with no broadband expansion projects planned by other providers in the near term; second, to encourage collaboration between providers or other grant applicants that might enable a partnership to provide broadband service more widely or to avoid overlap.

Applicants are encouraged to find partners among the various providers of broadband services or community-based organizations to use the grants as seed money to get operational infrastructure installed. The amount of local public and private funding will be considered when reviewing the full applications.

Applicants should also be aware of federal funds from the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act" that may be available from the USDA Rural Utilities Service (http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband.htm) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/).

In 2008, the Authority awarded five grants for $1.44 million (representing a total project value of more than $5.5 million). Four of the grants will provide high speed internet service to more than 45

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communities representing nearly 9,000 households and businesses, adding another 1.7 percent in potential household broadband availability. The fifth grant provides a match requirement for a project to build a fiber optic cable network that will connect and provide high speed telehealth services for three partnering medical centers and seven health care facilities in six towns across Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin counties.

The pre-application letters should be received by the Authority no later than June 1, 2009. Full application packages may be available by June 15, 2009. Completed detailed applications are due July 15, 2009. The pre-application form and questionnaire can be found at http://www.maine.gov/connectme/index.shtml

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U.S. CDC Confirms First H1N1 Case in Maine

May 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – The United States Centers for Disease Control confirmed a case from York County as being positive for H1N1 influenza, marking the first nationally confirmed case in Maine.

The total number of cases in Maine remains the same: two adults in Kennebec County, three adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All have suffered mild symptoms and are recovering.

Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the Maine CDC, praised the people of Maine for their effort in helping to contain this disease. "I am impressed by the good job that everyone is doing. People are staying informed, following proper hygiene and taking the proper precautions around this virus,'' she said.

Local public health and school officials continue to study guidance and evaluate the U.S. CDC's suggested social mitigation strategies to contain the H1N1 virus, including advice on closing schools, avoiding crowds and limiting public gatherings.

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation. As the number of cases increases, U.S. CDC is unlikely to verify every occurrence of the H1N1 virus.

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

Maine CDC Web site on Swine Flu: www.mainepublichealth.gov;
or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC Web site on Swine Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/

Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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Governor Baldacci Declares Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month

May 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed the United Bikers of Maine to the Blaine House Tuesday morning for a tea reception and to proclaim May 2009 as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month in Maine.

"To be a motorcycle rider is to take on an extra sense of responsibility on the roads," Governor Baldacci said. "Motorcyclists are probably the drivers who are most aware of the conditions of the roads and they have to be equally aware of the other drivers on those roads. We are here today to make sure that all motorists are aware that warmer weather is here and motorcycles are back on the roads."

Governor Baldacci spoke with many of the 75 bikers at the Blaine House during the reception about issues important to their group. Officials from the Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Safety were among some of the other featured speakers at the reception.

The Governor told the motorcyclists that he is proud of the charity work they do in their communities throughout the State.

"I know that you give back through events like the Toy Run," the Governor said. "A lot of children are very happy at Christmastime because of what you do. I also know that you do a lot more than just the Toy Run and while it may not get the same attention, it is equally commendable and appreciated."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, more motorcyclists are again on Maine's roads this year and the general public should realize the season for motorcycles is beginning; and

WHEREAS, we should be mindful to look out for these vehicles and look twice to save lives; and

WHEREAS, the safe operation of a motorcycle requires the use of special skills developed through a combination of training and expertise, the use of good judgment, plus a thorough knowledge of traffic laws and licensing requirements; and

WHEREAS, motorcycles represent 2.8 percent of all registered vehicles and unfortunately account for 6.8 percent of all motor vehicles fatalities,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May, 2009 as

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AND AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance and share the road.

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Governor Baldacci Signs Veterans Registration Plate Bill

May 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 213, An Act To Allow Military Reenlistees To Obtain a Veterans Registration Plate. Rep. Tom Saviello (U-Wilton) sponsored the legislation, which passed unanimously last month.

The law enables any person who has served in the Armed Forces for at least three years and who continues to serve to obtain a special veterans registration plate.

"This law is another way that we can recognize those who so honorably serve our State and our nation," Governor Baldacci said. "The overwhelming support of this legislation is a testament to the respect that we all share for those who are so valiantly serving to protect our country and preserve our way of life."

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Kennebunk Elementary to Reopen One Day Early

May 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Based on revised guidance on school closings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in consultation with the Maine Center for Disease Control, Maine Education Commissioner Susan Gendron advised Kennebunk Elementary School to reopen on Wednesday, a day earlier than previously recommended.

In the new guidelines issued Tuesday afternoon, the U.S. CDC no longer recommends that schools with probable cases of H1N1 influenza be closed. Instead, it recommends a focus on "keeping all student, faculty and staff with symptoms of influenza out of schools and childcare facilities during their period of illness and recuperation, when they are potentially infectious to others."

The Kennebunk Elementary School was closed starting last Thursday for an expected seven days after a student was found to be a likely case of H1N1. Subsequent tests showed that the identification was positive for H1N1.

"Based on the new guidance, I have recommended to the superintendent that the school re-open tomorrow. In addition, we will not be recommending to other schools that they close if and when Maine CDC identifies probable cases of H1N1 in students or staff," Gendron said. "However, we are not out of the woods. Students will continue to contract this flu. We need to be vigilant about the things we know we can do to help prevent the spread: coughing and sneezing into our sleeves or a tissue; washing hands frequently; and staying home if we are sick."

Gendron noted that, as previoulsy was the case, if staff and/or student absenteeism interferes with the school's ability to function, school closure would be considered in consultation with local school and health officials.

The U.S. CDC guidance says students, faculty and staff who appear to have influenza-like illness at arrival or who become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

The new U.S. CDC guidelines for schools can be found online at: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/K12_dismissal.htm and will be also be linked from the Maine Department of Education's H1N1 flu web pages and from the Maine CDC's web pages (see links below).

Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the Maine CDC, echoed Gendron's caution.

"The focus should be on family and staff," Mills said. "We need to encourage them to self-monitor for symptoms and, when they are exhibited, exclude themselves from school or work. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and each other."

She said if still exhibiting symptoms after seven days, those affected should stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have disappeared.

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The guidelines are also explicit that ill children should not attend alternative child care or congregate in community settings.

The Maine CDC continues to test possible cases of H1N1. No new cases were identified on Monday or Tuesday. Totals as of Tuesday, May 5: Two adults in Kennebec County, three adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All are recovering.

Dr. Mills reiterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and – most importantly – practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

1) Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.

2) Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

3) Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

4) If you get sick, stay home from work or school for seven days and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu and schools:

Maine Department of Education: http://www.maine.gov/education/h1n1/

Maine CDC: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1/

Preventing the Flu: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

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Governor Signs LD 1020, An Act to End Discrimination in Civil Marriage and Affirm Religious Freedom

May 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law LD 1020, An Act to End Discrimination in Civil Marriage and Affirm Religious Freedom.

"I have followed closely the debate on this issue. I have listened to both sides, as they have presented their arguments during the public hearing and on the floor of the Maine Senate and the House of Representatives. I have read many of the notes and letters sent to my office, and I have weighed my decision carefully," Governor Baldacci said. "I did not come to this decision lightly or in haste."

"I appreciate the tone brought to this debate by both sides of the issue," Governor Baldacci said. "This is an emotional issue that touches deeply many of our most important ideals and traditions. There are good, earnest and honest people on both sides of the question."

"In the past, I opposed gay marriage while supporting the idea of civil unions," Governor Baldacci said. "I have come to believe that this is a question of fairness and of equal protection under the law, and that a civil union is not equal to civil marriage."

"Article I in the Maine Constitution states that 'no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor be denied the equal protection of the laws, nor be denied the enjoyment of that person's civil rights or be discriminated against.'"

"This new law does not force any religion to recognize a marriage that falls outside of its beliefs. It does not require the church to perform any ceremony with which it disagrees. Instead, it reaffirms the separation of Church and State," Governor Baldacci said.

"It guarantees that Maine citizens will be treated equally under Maine's civil marriage laws, and that is the responsibility of government."

"Even as I sign this important legislation into law, I recognize that this may not be the final word," Governor Baldacci said. "Just as the Maine Constitution demands that all people are treated equally under the law, it also guarantees that the ultimate political power in the State belongs to the people."

"While the good and just people of Maine may determine this issue, my responsibility is to uphold the Constitution and do, as best as possible, what is right. I believe that signing this legislation is the right thing to do," Governor Baldacci said.

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Maine H1N1 Caseload increases to 10

May 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention identified three new cases of the H1N1 influenza, bringing the total number of identified cases in the State to 10. Newly identified cases include a child in Cumberland County, and one adult in both York and Kennebec Counties.

Totals as of Wednesday, May 6, are as follows: five in York County (four adults, one child); three adults in Kennebec County; and one child each in Cumberland County and Penobscot County. Four of the five York County cases have been confirmed by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and half of the 10 people in Maine with H1N1 have a history of travel.

"We expect that as this virus spreads, we will see more Mainers with H1N1 who have not traveled,'' said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the Maine CDC. "Our goal remains to slow the spread of H1N1 and we can do that by following proper respiratory hygiene and staying informed."

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation. As the number of cases increases, U.S. CDC is unlikely to verify every occurrence of the H1N1 virus.

There is no vaccine for the H1N1 influenza. U.S. CDC reports that a vaccine is currently being produced and may be available this fall. Antiviral drugs do not create immunity or cure the disease, but they do slow the spread of the disease and lessen symptoms.

Mills re-iterated the steps all should take to minimize the spread of H1N1 or any type of influenza:

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve; Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective; Try to avoid close contact with sick people; If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu and schools:

Maine CDC: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Preventing the Flu: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

Maine Department of Education: www.maine.gov/education/h1n1/

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Governor Baldacci Attends Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

May 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci celebrated the National Day of Prayer by attending an Interfaith Prayer Breakfast with members of Maine's Army National Guard Thursday morning in Augusta. Governor Baldacci joined more than 100 other attendees, including legislators and military family members, at the Augusta Armory for the event.

"We are in the grips of a global recession," Governor Baldacci said. "Families and businesses across our communities are struggling. But we in Maine – no matter what faith we come from – are strong in spirit and resourcefulness."

Chaplain Jeffrey Young, who once served as a battalion chaplain in Maine before moving out of state, was the guest speaker for the 18th annual breakfast.

Governor Baldacci has also proclaimed May 7, 2009, as A Day of Prayer in Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, since our nation's founding, Americans have turned to prayer for inspiration, strength and guidance; and

WHEREAS, especially since the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005, Americans have prayed for comfort in a time of grief, for understanding in a time of anger, and for protection in a time of uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, our national leaders have historically called on the prayers of the people, without regard to their religious affiliation, to meet the crises that have faced our nation; and

WHEREAS, the National Day of Prayer was first proclaimed by the Continental Congress in 1775; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thursday, April 30, 1863 as a day of prayer as "an effective remedy for national ills for all people in all nations"; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States, by legislative action in 1952 – and amended in 1988 - declared the first Thursday of May to be a National Day of Prayer,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May 7, 2009 as

A DAY OF PRAYER

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to join in this observance.

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Young Adult Hospitalized with H1N1 Virus

May 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Maine's first probable H1N1 case requiring hospitalization was identified late Thursday afternoon.

Dr. Dora Anne Mills of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention said the patient is a young adult from Cumberland County with underlying chronic illness and is one of two newly identified H1N1 patients in Maine, the other being a student who attends Bridgton Academy.

"As we continue to see H1N1 spread, it is not surprising to see an increase in severity,'' Mills said. "However, the key messages remain the same – if you have a fever with respiratory symptoms, stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. Proper respiratory etiquette remains a critical component of reducing the spread of H1N1 and we all need to do our part."

Proper respiratory etiquette includes the following steps:

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you get sick with a fever and respiratory symptoms, stay home from work or school for seven days and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

In Maine, there are now 12 people identified with H1N1: four adults and one youth in York County; three adults in Kennebec County one young adult and two youths in Cumberland County and one youth in Penobscot County.

Mills said that as the infection spreads, the number of people identified with H1N1 becomes less meaningful. "We've conducted about 1,000 tests and we know that H1N1 is here in Maine,'' Mills said. "Unless the test results would change treatment, we are not always recommending testing. Suspicious cases do not need to be tested so long as they are in a low-risk group, do not need antivirals, and those who have the symptoms are staying home."

Mills said that H1N1 appears to be spreading more quickly among children, and asked that parents be vigilant about keeping their children at home when ill – especially if they have respiratory symptoms accompanied by a fever.

There has been confusion resulting from terminology used to describe cases of H1N1. In some instances, cases have been called "confirmed" or "probable." A probable case means that tests performed by Maine CDC show a person has H1N1. Probable cases are then sent to U.S. CDC for final confirmation. As

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the number of cases increases, U.S. CDC is unlikely to verify every occurrence of the H1N1 virus. The U.S. CDC has confirmed four cases in Maine – all in York County.

Maine's current allocation for the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) antiviral medications and personal protection equipment (PPE) has been placed at nine pre-defined regional distribution hospitals. A system for request and distribution of emergency medications has been in place for sometime and was developed in partnership with the hospitals, Maine CDC and the Northern New England Poison Center.

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu, please visit the Maine CDC and U.S. CDC Web sites. Some specific resources:

For facts about influenza, and more information about H1N1 flu and schools:

Maine CDC: www.mainepublichealth.gov; or www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

U.S. CDC: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Preventing the Flu: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

Maine Department of Education: www.maine.gov/education/h1n1/

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Governor Baldacci Honors Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year

May 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci on Thursday night honored seven Maine youth who are receiving regional Youth of the Year Awards from Boys & Girls Clubs around Maine. The Governor spoke to the award winners about his own experience with the Boys & Girls Club, dating back to when he would go to the Club's Waterville facility while visiting family as a youth.

"When young people are surrounded by positive reinforcement they are able to see them grow and blossom," Governor Baldacci said. "Being able to have such a positive impact on someone's life is an amazing thing, and the Boys & Girls Clubs do it right."

Governor Baldacci told the group of awardees, family members, Boys & Girls Club staff members and dignitaries that he has always been impressed by people like Harold Alfond and Cal Ripken, two high-profile individuals who have been actively involved in the Club. The Governor recalled when Harold Alfond Fenway Park opened in Oakland in September 2007. Cal Ripken stood in the rain, tossing baseballs to area youth, giving every one of them a chance to hit a ball over the "Green Monster."

The dinner was held to present regional Youth of the Year awards to seven members of Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Maine and to announce the recipient of the statewide Youth of the Year award. The awards were judged by a panel of five leaders from the public and private sectors. The recipients were judged in a number of areas, including community activities, school activities, service to the Boys & Girls Club, life goals and obstacles they have overcome.

The list of award winners follows:

Shawna Albert, age 17 – Boys & Girls Club of Lewiston/Auburn Grade 12 at Edward Little High School

Nicole Guimond, age 18 – Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club Grade 12 at Lawrence High School

Cindy McGee, age 16 – Augusta Boys & Girls Club for Teens Grade 10 at Cony High School

Nate Mitchell, age 18 – Boys & Girls Club of Greater Gardiner Grade 12 at Gardiner Area High School

Michee Jean, age 18 – Portland Boys & Girls Club Grade 12 at Portland High School

Ashley Ross, age 18 – South Portland Boys & Girls Club Grade 12 at South Portland High School

** Morgan Talty, age 17 – Penobscot Nation Boys & Girls Club Grade 12 at Orono High School

** Morgan Talty was also named 2009 Maine Youth of the Year

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Maine Unveils New Ad Campaign as Part of National Tourism Week Celebration

May 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Tourism industry professionals from throughout Maine joined Governor John E. Baldacci at the State House this morning to kick off National Tourism Week and view the State's 2009 spring/summer advertising campaign.

The Governor read an official proclamation designating the week of May 9 Tourism Week in Maine, adding, "As our State's largest industry, travel and tourism is very important to Maine. Thanks to the more than 140,000 Mainers that work tirelessly to promote the world-class tourism offerings in every region of our state, the industry is strong and growing stronger."

Tourism generates approximately $10 billion in direct and indirect economic impact for the state each year.

The campaign includes online, magazine and television advertising. As part of the strategy to convey that Maine has more to offer than visitors ever expected, the campaign theme is "There's More to Maine."

Pat Eltman, Director of the Maine Office of Tourism, said, "We are really excited about this campaign because it's all about showing visitors how much there is to do here. It highlights a great variety of things to see and do – well beyond the activities people generally think of when they think of Maine."

This campaign will run through July 2009. Early magazine advertisements are reaching consumers' homes this week while television and online advertising will begin next week.

During the weekend of May 16 and 17, a free standing insert will be included in all Maine daily newspapers' weekend editions. The piece will promote "staycations" to Mainers to encourage them to vacation in their home state this summer.

National Tourism Week is the annual salute to tourism in Maine and throughout the United States. Hosted by the U.S. Travel Association (www.tia.org), its purpose is to elevate awareness about the economic, cultural and social benefits of tourism.

The new campaign logo can be accessed at http://industry.visitmaine.com/maine_logos/

Examples of the new print ad can be viewed online at http://industry.visitmaine.com/advertising/2009_advertising/

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Governor Announces Nomination to Workers' Compensation Board

May 8, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the nomination of Daniel Lawson to the Workers' Compensation Board. Lawson will replace Bruce Roy, who passed away in April.

Lawson, a Monroe resident, is employed at Verso Paper in Bucksport. He has worked at the mill for 21 years. He has been a member of the United Steelworker's Union (U.S.W.) Local 4-0261 for 14 years and currently serves as Local Vice President. He previously served the Town of Monroe in a number of capacities, including Selectman, Tax Assessor, member of the Planning Board of Appeals and volunteer fireman. Lawson earned his undergraduate degree from Centralia College in Centralia, Washington.

The mission of the Workers' Compensation Board is to serve the employees and employers of the State fairly and expeditiously by ensuring compliance with the workers' compensation laws, ensuring the prompt delivery of benefits legally due, promoting the prevention of disputes, utilizing dispute resolution to reduce litigation and facilitating labor-management cooperation.

The nomination must be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Labor and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor Meets with Independent Truckers' Group

May 8, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci met Wednesday with a group of independent truckers who are concerned about their ability to maintain their livelihood during the global recession. The Coalition to Lower Fuel Prices, formed during the height of diesel prices, has expanded its focus to ensure that small businessmen and -women who own and operate trucks are able to continue to operate. State Senator Elizabeth Schneider first worked with the group, and remains involved in aiding independent truckers during these challenging economic times.

"While diesel fuel costs have decreased significantly since last year, economic conditions continue to threaten Maine's independent truckers," said the Governor. "I greatly appreciate the input from this group as we seek to find solutions to ensure they can weather this recession. I applaud the hard work and tenacity of independent truckers as the hang on in this difficult economy, and I pledged to continue listening and doing whatever I can to assist their survival."

Belinda Raymond of the Coalition said that many independent truckers were still hurting from the extreme costs of business brought on by the spike in diesel fuel. As mills around the State are experiencing slow downs or closures due to the economic crisis, truckers are seeing a corresponding slowing of business. Some may not be able to stay afloat, Raymond said. Another issue currently troubling truckers is the fines imposed by state and federal commercial motor vehicle regulators.

Governor Baldacci vowed to stay engaged and continue working with the Coalition. The Governor has been active in working with paper companies operating in Maine to ensure their survival. In addition, the Governor supports changing federal law in order to raise the weight limit for six-axle trucks to 100,000 pounds on the Interstate highway system in Maine. The Governor pledged to contact the Maine Congressional Delegation as well as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood to urge this federal law change.

The Governor also supports efforts for a federal law relating to fuel surcharges, to ensure that the extra money gets to the truckers who incur the higher fuel costs. Senator Snowe's office has been helping with this.

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Governor Nominates Members to the State Board of Education

May 11, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated six members to the Board of Education: James W. Carignan of Harpswell; Lynda A. Doyle of Durham; Andrea Levinsky of Portland; Nancy S. Perkins of Cornish; Steven M. Pound of Greenville; and Jeffrey A. Vermette of Windham. Carignan is a reappointment, while the other five nominees are new appointments.

"These individuals will use their leadership and experience to provide thoughtful policy advice during a crucial time of change in our State education system," said the Governor. "Combined, these members bring a great level of expertise, including teaching, administration and oversight of local education systems. Their array of experience, combined with lifelong commitment to the youth of this State, will help the nominees navigate these challenging times."

Carignan has served six years on the Board. He retired from Bates College, having served as a professor and Dean of the College. Carignan received his undergraduate degree from Bates College and earned a Ph.D from the University of Rochester.

Doyle has been self-employed as a counselor for 20 years. Prior to that, she was a counselor at the University of Southern Maine and served as an instructor at the University of Maine. Doyle received her undergraduate degree from the University of Southern Maine, an M.S.E.D from University of Southern Maine, and a Doctorate in Counseling Education from the University of Maine.

Levinsky would serve as a student representative on the Board. She is a student at Deering High School in Portland, where she is president of her class. Levinsky is active in mock trial, band, chorus and Key Club at school. Her community activities include volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, Relay for Life, a local soup kitchen and her synagogue. Levinsky also works at a creative arts camp for children.

Perkins is a retired educator, having served 30 years in the field, most of which was in SAD 6. She currently serves as a selectman in Cornish, and sits on the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission's Executive Board. Perkins earned her undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Southern Maine.

Pound has served the last two years as Associate Director for Workforce Development at the Cianbro Institute. Prior to that, he was the Superintendent of Union 60. He also held a number of education and administrative positions in Canada. Pound currently serves on the Maine Jobs Council and has been an active member of numerous past and present education and economic development associations. He received a B.S. and Bachelor of Education Elementary and Secondary Teaching Certifications from Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Pound earned a master's from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Laval University in Quebec City.

Vermette is employed at Cross Insurance. Prior to that, he owned and ran Lake Region Insurance Agency for 12 years. He had served on the Windham School Board for 11 years and on the Regional Planning

Committee for the RSU 14 consolidation. Vermette earned a B.S. in Business Administration from Husson College (now Husson University).

The Maine State Board of Education is authorized to act in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education in matters concerning State Laws relating to education. Among additional charges, the Board is delegated specific powers to make recommendations to the Legislature for the efficient conduct of the public schools; to approve the formation of School Administrative Districts; to establish requirements for approval and accreditation of elementary and secondary schools; to grant permission for administrative units to enter into agreements for cooperative educational purposes; to approve standards for school construction; and to approve school construction projects for State aid.

The Governor's nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor Proclaims AmeriCorps Week in Maine

May 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined the Maine Commission for Community Service to announce that May 9-16 has been proclaimed AmeriCorps Week in the State of Maine and that all citizens are urged to recognize this observance.

"AmeriCorps Week gives us the opportunity to salute members and alumni, to thank the community partners who make AmeriCorps possible, and to encourage others to serve," Governor Baldacci said.

During the ceremony, Governor Baldacci signed the proclamation while AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members, alumni and AmeriCorps program directors looked on.

Maine has had 3,500 AmeriCorps members over the last 16 years who have received $11.7 million in education awards. This year, the Corporation for National and Community Service will commit more than $6.7 million to support Maine's national service initiatives including Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Learn and Serve. This federal money coming into Maine will help support much needed work across the State, such as mentoring children, keeping Maine people safe and warm in their homes, and caring for those in need.

Earlier this year, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act to grow national service participants from 75,000 to 250,000 with focus on priority needs including advancing student achievement and graduation, providing economic opportunity, increasing energy efficiency, improving health care access, and enhancing service opportunities for veterans. For information on how to get involved during AmeriCorps Week and year round visit www.VolunteerMaine.org.

The Maine Commission for Community Service builds capacity and sustainability in Maine's volunteer sector by funding service programs, developing managers of volunteers, raising awareness of the scope and impact of the sector, and encouraging an ethic of service. To learn more about the Maine Commission for Community Service visit www.maineservicecommission.gov.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and throughout our history citizens have stepped up to meet challenges by volunteering in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the current economic downturn means more Americans are facing hardships, and volunteering and national service is needed now more than ever; and

WHEREAS, the AmeriCorps national service program has proven to be a highly effective way to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in meeting a wide range of community needs and promote the ethic of service and volunteering since its creation in 1994; and

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WHEREAS, each year AmeriCorps, including AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC, provides opportunities for 75,000 citizens across the nation, to give back in an intensive way to our communities, our state, and our country, including nearly 4,000 men and women from Maine taking the AmeriCorps pledge; and

WHEREAS, those AmeriCorps members have served a total of 5,416,769 hours helping to improve the lives of our state's most vulnerable citizens, strengthen our educational system; protect our environment, and contribute to our public safety; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps was designed to give a key role to states in deciding where resources should be directed to meet state and local needs through the work of Governor-appointed state service commissions, including the Maine Commission for Community Service; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps members last year recruited and supervised close to 17,400 community volunteers, demonstrating AmeriCorps value as a powerful catalyst and force multiplier; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps members from the State of Maine have earned more than $11,718,262 in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards since the inception of AmeriCorps to further their own educational advancement at colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, many AmeriCorps members, after their terms of service end, remain engaged in our communities as volunteers, teachers, public servants, and nonprofit leaders; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps Week (May 9-16, 2009) is an opportune time for the people of Maine to salute AmeriCorps members and alums for their powerful impact; thank all of AmeriCorps' community partners in Maine who make the program possible; and bring more Americans into service,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May 9-16, 2009 as

AMERICORPS WEEK

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to thank AmeriCorps members and alumni for their service and to find ways to give back to their communities.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Violence Victim Memorial Legislation

May 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 117, Resolve, To Facilitate the Creation of a Memorial for the Families and Friends of Children Who Have Died by Violence. Rep. Patsy Crockett (D-Augusta) sponsored the legislation, which passed last month in the House and Senate.

"Our children are precious," Governor Baldacci said. "Anyone who has lost a child has suffered a deep loss that can never be filled. The loss of a child to a violent act leaves deep emotional wounds. In Maine, we are one community, and we support our neighbors when tragedy strikes."

The law allows for private funds to be collected for the memorial, using no State General Fund dollars for its construction. If sufficient outside funding is received, the memorial will be constructed within the East Campus Zone of the Capitol grounds.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremony by Rep. Crockett, and co-sponsors, supporters and advocates of the legislation.

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Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff

May 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – In accordance with the Presidential proclamation and in remembrance and honor of all our law enforcement officers, especially those who have given their lives in the line of duty, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Friday, May 15, 2009, in recognition of Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week May 10 - 16, 2009.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs State Park Bills

May 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci ceremonially signed two bills today that will protect and support Maine State Parks. LD 562, "An Act To Support Maine State Parks," and LD 67, "An Act To Protect Beaches in Maine's State Parks" were both ceremonially signed by the Governor in his office with bill sponsors and supporters present.

"These two pieces of legislation work to support our State parks financially, while protecting some of our most valuable natural resources for many generations to come," Governor Baldacci said.

LD 562 enables the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands to rent equipment at State parks and to sell appropriate merchandise at State parks and historic sites. The money collected from rentals and sales will be used for operation and maintenance of the parks. LD 562 was sponsored by Rep. Jeff McCabe (D-Skowhegan).

LD 67, sponsored by Sen. John Nutting (D-Androscoggin), prohibits smoking at certain areas of Maine State parks and historic sites, including beaches, playgrounds, snack bars and group picnic shelters.

"People from around the world know of Maine's spectacular outdoor activities, scenic views and family-friendly activities," the Governor said. "By prohibiting smoking from areas at State parks and other State-run facilities, we are ensuring that tourists and Mainers alike can visit these areas unencumbered by secondhand smoke and cigarette butts."

Both bills were passed as emergency legislation, taking effect immediately with the Governor's signature.

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Governor Nominates Board of Environmental Protection Members

May 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has nominated two people to the Board of Environmental Protection.

The Governor has nominated for reappointment Elizabeth Ehrenfeld of Falmouth. He also nominated as a new appointee Franklin E. Woodard of Falmouth.

"The Board of Environmental Protection is charged with important tasks that help ensure that Maine's valuable natural resources and environment are protected for future generations," said Governor Baldacci. "These nominees bring unique experience and knowledge to the Board and are committed to ensuring that the public has a strong voice in Department decisions."

Ehrenfeld has served on the Board for four years. She has served as adjunct professor at Southern Maine Community College for eight years, where she had founded the biotechnology program in 2005. Ehrenfeld has previous experience in the private sector, including as a research scientist at IDEXX Laboratories. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Ehrenfeld holds a B.A. from Cornell University and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Woodard retired in 2004 as President of Woodard & Curran, an environmental consulting company that he co-founded in 1979. Woodard had been a professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Maine for 12 years. The Environmental Engineering laboratory at the University was named in his honor in 2002. Woodard earned Bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Maine and a Ph.D. from Purdue University.

As members of the Board of Environmental Protection, which was created by the Legislature, the nominees will provide regulatory authority over environmental laws through review of selected permit applications, licensing, enforcement actions and rulemaking. Nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources and approved by the full Senate.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Fraternal Benefit Society Oversight Legislation

May 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 157, An Act To Enhance Oversight of Fraternal Benefit Societies. Rep. Sharon Treat (D-Hallowell) sponsored the legislation, which gives the Superintendent of Insurance similar enforcement authority over fraternal benefit societies as the superintendent currently has over non-fraternal entities. The Superintendent of Insurance had restricted authority over fraternal benefit societies, such as the Freemasons or Oddfellows, organizations that provide insurance to its members.

"This legislation brings regulatory standards for fraternal benefit societies into line with other institutions that offer insurance coverage to customers," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has strong consumer protections and this Act brings products from fraternals under that same umbrella."

The law also amends the definition of "insurer" to include fraternal benefit societies.

It will take effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

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Beth Bordowitz Sworn In as FAME CEO

May 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Elizabeth L. Bordowitz was sworn in today as Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). Bordowitz will lead an agency critical to the goals of increasing economic and educational opportunities for the people of Maine.

"Beth Bordowitz has the experience and leadership necessary to lead the Finance Authority of Maine through some difficult national economic times," Governor Baldacci said. "She has proven herself as acting director of this agency and I am happy that she will continue on as the CEO of FAME."

A resident of Portland, Bordowitz has served as acting CEO of FAME since October 2007. She has concurrently served as General Counsel, a position she's held in the agency since 1995. She began her career at FAME as assistant counsel in 1989.

FAME, a quasi-independent State agency established in 1983, provides innovative financial solutions to help Maine people and businesses pursue educational and business opportunities. Providing a wide array of business financing programs, FAME ensures that Maine businesses have access to capital. FAME helps students and families meet the costs of higher education through a variety of loan, grant and scholarship programs.

To learn more about FAME or any of the above programs, please visit www.famemaine.com.

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First Lady Launches Read With ME. 2009

May 14, 2009

PORTLAND – First Lady Karen M. Baldacci today read to kindergarten students at the Reiche School to kick-off the 10th year of Read With ME. The statewide program of Maine Reads is aimed at improving literacy and reading skills among Maine's students. Read With ME. is made possible by FairPoint Communications.

"It's exciting to be celebrating 10 years of Read With ME. and we greatly appreciate the ongoing support of FairPoint Communications," said the First Lady. "This year we honor Maine artist and writer Holly Meade, whose colorful illustrations and sweet study of sleep and the animal world should appeal to many children."

This year's featured book, A Place to Sleep, was written and illustrated by Holly Meade, a resident of Sedgwick. Meade joined the First Lady at the school today. Her book will be distributed to Maine's more than 18,500 kindergartners in the fall as part of the literacy outreach program.

Through Read With ME., every kindergartner in the State has the opportunity to receive a book bag. Each year the featured book for distribution is selected by a committee of educators, parents, teachers, librarians, literacy professionals and authors.

A Place to Sleep has been specially designed and reissued for Read With ME. to include activities for young readers. Each book bag also includes literacy information and a bookmark developed by the Maine Department of Education and illustrated by Meade.

School libraries will be provided with DVDs produced by FairPoint Communications in collaboration with Maine Public Broadcasting and the Maine State Library. These DVDs offer tips about reading aloud. In addition, for the first time, a clip of the First Lady reading from the book with the words captioned at the bottom will be put on the Web site of Maine Reads (www.mainereads.org) so that children may read along with the First Lady. This online addition is part of the FairPoint Communications Digital Enrichment program.

This month, principals in each school in Maine that has kindergarten students will receive a letter inviting them to take part in the program. Each participating school will receive the books and literacy information as school opens in September. Packing and delivery of program materials to the schools will be handled by the Maine National Guard and a 100-person volunteer corps. Last year, Read With ME. reached 18,500 students across the state.

FairPoint Communications has awarded Read with ME. a $75,000 grant to help underwrite the program and provide all of the books and information at no cost to the schools and students. Maine Reads is one of the local community programs supported by FairPoint. For more information visit www.mainereads.org

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Maine Receives Grant for Communities Impacted by Spring 2008 Flooding

May 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a Federal grant totaling more than $2.1 million to assist communities impacted by spring flooding that began April 28, 2008. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery aid will provide valuable resources to about 96 municipalities across the seven counties affected by the flooding that began on April 28, 2008.

"These federal funds will help Maine communities to continue to recover from the severe flooding that impacted a large part of the State last year," said Governor Baldacci. "I visited many areas, especially hard-hit Fort Kent, and am reminded of their commitment to rebuild and get their communities back to business. This grant will go a long way to helping them achieve that goal."

The CDBG Disaster Recovery grant program supplements other disaster assistance. Grant funding from this program enables communities designated as Presidential Disaster Areas to address unmet needs such as housing, infrastructure and public service. The funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and will be administered by the Office of Community Development with close cooperation and assistance from the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

The Disaster Recovery Action Plan approved by HUD will provide Fort Kent with more than $1.5 million to help rebuild a 16-unit low-income senior housing facility in Fort Kent. The remaining $581,000 from the grant will be distributed between approximately 96 communities located in the affected counties of Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sumerset and Waldo. These funds will cover the required 15 percent State share as reimbursement for public repairs made necessary by the storms.

Beginning on April 28, 2008, the State of Maine suffered severe rain storms, snow melt and flooding. As a result of the flooding, infrastructure was damaged over a wide area and 386 houses were destroyed, damaged or affected. The destruction of the Fort Kent senior housing complex displaced 18 people.

In addition to other State and federal assistance to impacted areas, the State awarded the Town of Fort Kent a $120,000 CDBG Urgent Need Program. The Governor had also directed a number of State agencies to coordinate with the municipalities impacted by the storm to facilitate recovery.

"State departments including the Maine Emergency Management Agency, Department of Economic and Community Development, the Finance Authority of Maine and MaineHousing, among others, worked together to help the families and businesses on the long road to recovery," said the Governor. "This reminds us that it takes time for communities to recover from a natural disaster, and it takes the efforts of many people to help in that process."

For more information on the CDBG Disaster Recovery program, visithttp://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/drsi/

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Governor Baldacci Kicks Off Wind Blade Challenge

May 15, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today kicked off the inaugural Maine High School Wind Blade Challenge at the University of Maine.

Eighteen high schools from around Maine have been working for two months to research designs and produce wind blades for the competition. The schools created a total of 31 teams to work with a kit of composite resources to produce the blades. The teams all gathered at the University of Maine Fieldhouse this morning to test the blades and determine the winner of the competition.

"I know everyone involved has been impressed with the talent and drive of the students competing in this challenge," Governor Baldacci said. "What you've succeeded in doing today has great potential for Maine's economy in the future. We hope that your interest has grown in the possibilities of the composite and alternative energy technologies you have been working with, because you are Maine's future."

Teams were required to build the blades no longer than 18 inches long and to create turbines no greater than 42 inches in diameter. Once the teams produced their blades, they traveled to a composite lab in their area to wrap their blades with fiber glass cloth and infuse them with resin. The official testing at the University of Maine today measured the power output of each blade turbine design at a set wind speed.

"Your experience today can become a springboard for your future career," the Governor said to the students. "Your education and now your familiarity with what's happening in the field of composites, as well as your contact with the forward thinking institutions that are already achieving great things in the field, can lead to a great amount of success in what is a rapidly growing industry. Continuing your education in math and sciences can translate into exciting opportunities for your future."

The winners of the 2009 Maine High School Wind Blade Challenge are:

Sumner Memorial High School, Team 1

Machias Memorial High School

Old Town High School

Brunswick High School, Team 2

Sumner Memorial High School, Team 3

The complete list of schools participating in the Maine Wind Blade Challenge:

Hancock County Technical Center, Ellsworth (2 teams)

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Shead High School, Eastport

Falmouth High School, Falmouth

Machias Memorial High School, Machias

Jay High School, Jay

Ellsworth High School, Ellsworth

Upper Kennebec Valley High School, Bingham (5 teams)

Old Town High School, Old Town

Greely High School, Cumberland

Sanford Regional Vocational Center, Sanford

Thornton Academy, Saco

Mattanawcook Academy, Lincoln

Sumner Memorial High School, Sullivan (2 teams)

Sacopee Valley High School, South Hiram (2 teams)

Lewiston High School, Lewiston (5 teams)

Bath Regional Vocational Center/Morse High, Bath

Brunswick High School, Brunswick (3 teams)

Maine Vocational Region 10, Brunswick

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Maine Receives Grant for Combating Domestic Violence

May 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a Federal Recovery Act grant totaling more than $1 million to support the State and communities in their efforts to improve responses to domestic violence and sexual assault. The Recovery Act STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program is specifically designed to enable communities to hire and retain criminal justice and victim services personnel.

"While Maine is one of the safest states in the country, domestic violence continues to be a dangerous problem in the State," said Governor Baldacci. "This grant provides valuable resources to help us combat this crime."

This grant is one of many from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that support important services to Maine people and create or preserve jobs in the State.

The STOP Program encourages partnerships between law enforcement, prosecution, courts and victim services organizations to enhance safety and hold offenders accountable for their crimes.

"Domestic violence and sexual assault are not only crimes, but violations of a person's basic rights as a human being," said the Governor. "A coordinated community-based response is required to address this violence and provide assistance for victims."

For more information about the STOP program, visit http://www.maine.gov/dps/

For more information about the Recovery Act and its impact on Maine, visit http://www.mainerecovery.gov/

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Include Falmouth in the Portland Transit District

May 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 452, An Act To Include the Town of Falmouth as a Member of the Greater Portland Transit District.

The law enables the Town of Falmouth to become a full member of the Greater Portland Transit District. It also defines the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System as the organization for the Portland region to improve the coordination of transportation planning and investment decisions by State, municipal and public transportation organizations.

"This law recognizes that public transportation is a growing option in our communities, and we want to make public transportation an attractive option for as many people as possible," Governor Baldacci said. "While gas prices remain lower than last summer, we know they could spike at any time and we've seen prices increase quickly just within the last weeks. Maine and the nation must aggressively pursue alternative energy and transportation modes to reduce our dependency on foreign oil."

The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Mary Nelson (D-Falmouth) and passed without opposition as emergency legislation, meaning it took effect immediately with the Governor's signature.

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Governor Congratulates Congressional Art Contest Winners

May 16, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today hosted a celebration at the Blaine House to recognize the finalists of the 2009 Congressional High School Art Competition for Maine. The two winners, one from each U.S. Congressional District, will have their artwork displayed in a corridor of the U.S. Capitol Building. The artwork of the winners and the six runners-up currently hang in the Governor's Gallery at the State House in Augusta.

"Congratulations to the talented students who have joined us today," said Governor Baldacci. "We celebrate your achievement, and we are proud of what you have accomplished. Your creativity and skill are inspirational."

The Congressional Art Competition provides a way for Members of Congress to recognize the artistic talents of their young constituents. U.S. Representatives Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree partnered with the Maine Arts Commission for this year's competition. The Maine Arts Commission chose the jurors who selected the winners.

This year's winners from each Congressional district are:

First District

Winner: Suki Nesvig from Waynflete School in Portland

Runners-Up: Alex Bucaro from Portland High School

Christina Carver from Rockland District High School

Ike Voorhees from Waynflete School

Second District

Winner: Michele Jaffarian from Rangeley Lakes Regional School

Runners-Up: Sheila Currier from Dexter Regional High School

Erin Aitken from Edward Little High School

Michael Peitersen from Edward Little High School

The Governor said, "Maine has long been known as a place that lends to creativity and innovation. Maine's arts and cultural programs are alive and are a critical part of the attraction of people to this State."

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Governor Remembers Gloria Layman

May 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned of yesterday's passing of York County Commissioner Gloria Layman. Layman had served as County Commissioner since 2005. She had been appointed to the position by the Governor following the passing of her husband.

"Gloria was a strong advocate for the people of York County," said Governor Baldacci. "She was a dear friend to me and my family, and we keep her family and friends in our prayers. She will be greatly missed."

The Governor has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff in York County on the day of Gloria Layman's funeral, the date of which is not yet known.

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Governor Celebrates Arbor Week

May 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined in a celebration to mark the beginning of Arbor Week in Maine. Since 1978, the State has recognized the third full week in May as Arbor Week. This year's theme is "Take it Outside, in Maine's cities and towns."

"Community trees and parks are part of what differentiates Maine from 'Anywhere, USA,'" Governor Baldacci said. "And trees are vital to our outdoor recreation industry by providing shade on a warm summer hike and putting on a spectacular display of color every fall."

According to the Maine Forest Service, forest products are a $11 billion per year industry in the State, employing more than 20,000 Maine workers. Outdoor recreation and leaf-peeping contribute $1.3 billion to the State's $13 billion tourism industry.

More than three-quarters of a million acres of forest land has been conserved since 2002, which is more land conserved than any other administration since Percival Baxter's administration.

"Maine's identity is inseparable from its natural resources," the Governor said. "Our future economic prosperity depends upon our ability to distinguish what makes Maine so special."

The celebration at the Maine State Museum concluded with awards recognizing individuals and municipalities active in promoting tree management.

Governor Baldacci presented an award to the National Arbor Day Foundation Poster Contest winner, fifth-grader Rose Horowitz of the West Harpswell School.

Sixteen municipalities that participate in Tree City USA received awards: Auburn, Augusta, Bangor, Bath, Camden, Farmington, Hallowell, Hampden, Kennebunkport, Lewiston, Orono, Portland, South Portland, Waterville, Westbrook and Yarmouth. Member communities meet standards for community tree management.

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Governor Applauds Committee Approval of Budget Plan

May 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement concerning the work done by the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs to approve two-year budget plan.

"Under the best of circumstances, passing a State budget is a difficult undertaking. This year the task has been made even more challenging by a global recession and declining State revenues," Governor Baldacci said. "The Appropriations Committee has worked cooperatively, putting aside partisanship, to make many hard choices. The budget the committee has passed strikes the right balance."

"From the beginning of this process, I have emphasized the necessity of shared sacrifice," Governor Baldacci said. "With its work, the Appropriations Committee has found a reasonable and fair approach to balancing the State budget."

"I want to thank the members of the committee and Legislative leaders in both the House and the Senate who have worked tirelessly to find bipartisan agreement on the budget," Governor Baldacci said. "I would encourage the full Legislature, which will now consider the plan, to move quickly."

"This budget will help position Maine for economic recovery, make significant structural changes in government and protect our State's core values," Governor Baldacci said.

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Governor Announces Nominations to Health Councils

May 19, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced his nominations to the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development (ACHSD) and the Maine Quality Forum Advisory Council. Both groups are the product of Dirigo Health Reform, which became law in 2003.

The Advisory Council on Health Systems Development is a 19-member stakeholder advisory group that includes five legislators. The Council meets monthly and advises the Governor's Office in the writing and implementation of the State Health Plan and is responsible for an annual cost driver study and recommendations to the Legislature.

The Maine Quality Forum Advisory Council is a 17-member stakeholder group with representation from consumers, providers, payers and insurers represented. The Council advises the Forum on various issues pertaining to the State Health Plan, including such issues as collecting research, promoting best practices, collecting and publishing comparative quality data, promoting electronic technology and promoting healthy lifestyles.

"The perspectives and experience of these talented individuals will help us continue the hard work of improving health care for all Maine people. Healthy families and healthy businesses make a healthy economy," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor is reappointing four people and appointing one new individual to the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development.

The reappointments are:

Andrew Coburn, a resident of Yarmouth, is the Director of the Institute for Health Policy at the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine. He is also a faculty member at the School's Graduate Program in Health Policy and Management.

Dr. Maroulla Gleaton, of Palermo, is a practicing ophthalmologist at Atlee Gleaton Eye Care in Augusta. She currently serves as a Trustee of the Maine Health Access Foundation.

Anne Graham, a resident of North Yarmouth, is a pediatric nurse practitioner at Maine Neurology in Scarborough.

Edward Miller, of Hallowell, is the Executive Director of the American Lung Association of Maine and serves as Senior Vice President for Public Policy for American Lung Association of New England.

The new appointment to the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development is James Highland, of Yarmouth. Highland is president of Compass Health Analytics in Portland. He has previously worked for Blue Cross Blue Shield, Massachusetts; the American Hospital Association; and University of Pennsylvania.

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The Governor is reappointing six people and appointing two new individuals to the Maine Quality Forum Advisory Council.

The reappointments are:

James Case, of Yarmouth, serves as a Vice President at McTeague, Higbee, Case, Cohen, Whitney & Toker, P.A. He serves as counsel for the Maine AFL-CIO.

Dr. W. Steven Gefvert resides in Cumberland Foreside. He is retired from practice in gastroenterology. He has been volunteering at the Portland Community Free Clinic and also serves part-time at University Health Care of the University of New England.

Dr. Jeffrey Holstrom, of South Portland, serves as the Medical Director of Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Maine and as Medical Director of the University Health Care, University of New England.

Rebecca Martins, of Warren, is the president of Blue Water Fabrications, a custom marine fabrication business. She serves on the Board of Directors of the nonprofit Consumers Advancing Patient Safety.

Elizabeth "Lisa" Miller, a resident of Somerville, is serving her third term in the Maine House of Representatives and serves as the Senior Program Officer at The Bingham Program's Augusta office.

Dr. Janice Wnek, of Brunswick, is a practicing physician at Midcoast Pediatrics and is also self-employed as Physician Quality Leader at Mid Coast Hospital.

The two new appointments to the Maine Quality Forum Advisory Council are:

Susan Henderson, of South Portland, is an associate professor at the Department of Nursing at Saint Joseph's College. She is the current president of the American Nurses Association of Maine.

Peter Schultz, a resident of Rome, is the owner and president of Dirigo Stitching, Inc. in Skowhegan. He is active in municipal government and is on the Board of Directors of the Somerset Economic Development Corporation.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, but do not require confirmation by the Senate.

Information on the councils and other aspects of Dirigo Health Reform can be found at www.maine.gov/GOHPF

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Governor Honors Maine Emergency Medical Service Providers

May 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine EMS providers and other health and community representatives to recognize the outstanding achievements of emergency medical service personnel. The 22nd annual Maine EMS ceremony focused on the partnerships that are improving quality care statewide and the day-to-day contributions of first responders.

"Maine EMS and other providers throughout this great State are helping to build systems of care that improve the health and safety of Maine people," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said there are many examples of Maine EMS contributing to the ongoing efforts to ensure Maine has the best health care available from one end of the State to the other.

"Programs such as HeartSafe Communities and the Maine Quality Forum's 'In a Heartbeat' initiative promote the kind of collaboration among communities, providers and health care organizations that helps ensure all Maine people receive the care they need, when they need it," said the Governor.

Maine EMS and the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program have collaborated with statewide partners to increase public recognition of heart attack and stroke symptoms.

The HeartSafe Community Program promotes early access to pre-hospital treatment protocols to speed diagnosis and treatment. This year eight new communities have been designated for the HeartSafe program, for a total of 37 statewide, covering about half of Maine residents.

Awards were presented to:

Governor's Award

Maine Health Information Center, Manchester

Lifetime Achievement Award

Chief Les Brown, East Millinocket Fire Rescue

Judith Wills, NorthStar EMS, Carrabassett Valley

EMS Merit Award

Tiffany Stebbins, Oakland

Gary Gardner, Eagle Lake

The eight new HeartSafe Designees recognized today are:

Gold

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Bucksport Fire and Ambulance

Kennebunk Fire Rescue

Orono Fire Department

Saco Fire Department

Platinum

Bangor Fire Department

Redington-Fairview General Hospital EMS

South Portland Fire Department

United Ambulance Service – Bridgton, Denmark and Sweden

For more information about Maine EMS, please visit http://www.maine.gov/dps/ems/

More information on Maine HeartSafe Communities can be found at http://www.healthymainepartnerships.org/mcvhp/heartsafe.aspx

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Animal Welfare License Plate Bill

May 20, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 178, An Act To Create the Support Animal Welfare Registration Plate. Bill sponsor Sen. John Nutting (D-Androscoggin) was in the Governor's Office for the signing, as were other co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

The legislation authorizes the Secretary of State to issue a specialty plate to support animal welfare. Proceeds of the plate will go toward support of the State's animal welfare auxiliary fund and the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund.

"The supporters of this vanity plate have already achieved the minimum 2,000 plate orders necessary to move forward," Governor Baldacci said. "This shows that Maine people are eager to find ways, even in this difficult national economic environment, to support animal welfare."

The cost of the animal welfare license plate is $20 and the first plate will be issued no later than Oct. 1, 2009.

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Governor Baldacci Honors Fitness Award Winners

May 20, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today honored eight groups, businesses and individuals for their fitness achievements at the 2009 Maine Fitness Awards. The awards ceremony, sponsored by the Governor's Council on Physical Activity, also honored four runners-up and a number of honorable mentions for encouraging and promoting physical activity throughout Maine.

"Good health impacts everything we do," Governor Baldacci said. "Kids who are healthy perform better in school and are better prepared for successful careers. Workers who are healthy are more productive. We are all able to more fully enjoy time with family and friends when we are healthy."

Governor Baldacci told the group that nearly 75 percent of deaths in Maine are caused by four chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease and diabetes. The Governor said that all four diseases are influenced by preventable health hazards.

"To prevent health problems and create healthier communities Maine citizens must be encouraged to stay physically active and to keep a healthy diet," the Governor said. "We must incentivize our citizens, especially our children, to explore their world and get more physical activity in their lives."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremony by the Governor's Council on Physical Activity Co-Chairs, Dr. Erik N. Steele and Joan Benoit Samuelson.

The list of award recipients follows:

Winners:

Youth – School Category – Old Orchard Beach Coordinated School Health Program

Community Category – Worksite Stars of York County, Sanford

Adult Category – Maine Senior Games, Scarborough

Special Populations Category – "YES Program," MDI Hospital, Bar Harbor

Healthy Workplace – Small Business Category – City of Ellsworth Wellness Committee

Healthy Workplace – Medium Business Category – National Semiconductor, South Portland

Healthy Workplace – Large Business Category – The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor

Lifetime Achievement Category – Dr. William Dexter, Director of Sports Medicine, Maine Medical Center, Portland

Runners-Up: - Youth – School Category – "Healthy Me, Healthy ME (Maine)," Dyer Elementary School, South Portland- Community Category – "Healthy You," Cary Medical Center, Caribou- Adult Category –

Windham Adult Education, Windham- Healthy Workplace – Medium Business Category – Martin's Point Health Care, Portland

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Governor Baldacci Congratulates State Police Award Recipients

May 20, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today congratulated recipients of the 2008 State Police Awards during a ceremony held at the State Police Headquarters in Augusta.

"Families and visitors alike are drawn to Maine because of the abundance of natural beauty and our reputation for open, welcoming and safe communities," Governor Baldacci said. "Today we recognize individuals who have stood out in 2008 and have served as role models for us all. At every level – local, county and State – Maine law enforcement officials are true heroes."

Awards were given out to civilians, local law enforcement officials, deputies and troopers for their heroic efforts dealing with incidents throughout Maine in 2008.

Also at the ceremony, the 2008 Trooper of the Year Award was presented to Detective Jason Andrews of Criminal Investigation Division II; and the Legendary Trooper Award was given to Captain Hollis "Tom" Dixon, a Maine State Trooper from 1958 – 1983.

"Everyone in this room and our law enforcement personnel throughout this State deserve credit and thanks for continuing to make Maine one of the safest states in the nation," the Governor said.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Resolve to Increase Blood Supply

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was joined today by Rep. Joseph Wagner (D-Lyman) and his family to ceremonially sign LD 574, Resolve, To Increase the Blood Supply.

The resolve instructs the Department of Health and Human Services to work with blood donation centers to inform them about guidance from the FDA regarding hereditary hemochromatosis, an iron metabolism disorder. It is estimated that 1 in 200 people in the United States have hemochromatosis, which is treated, in part, by frequent blood donations. In the past, there were barriers to using blood from patients with the disorder, although the FDA concluded 10 years ago that there are no health risks for the blood collected from those patients for donation purposes.

"This resolve recognizes the need to both increase blood donations and to help patients with hereditary hemochromatosis," Governor Baldacci said. "Through this resolve we can help meet the needs of our blood supply and it helps patients who use donations to manage their health. This legislation makes a lot of sense."

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Maine Receives Grant to Enhance Public Safety Efforts Statewide

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a Federal Recovery Act grant totaling more than $6 million to support and enhance State and local law enforcement efforts. The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Formula Grant Program (JAG) funds have traditionally been used for multi-jurisdictional drug task force efforts and other law enforcement and criminal justice efforts.

"This Recovery Act grant provides critical support to local and multi-jurisdictional prevention and law enforcement programs that keep our homes and streets safe," said Governor Baldacci.

The Maine Justice Assistance Council has established JAG funding priorities and will make awards, which are administered by the Maine Department of Public Safety. More than $2.5 million of the $6 million grant will fund statewide criminal justice efforts such as a computer crimes prosecutor, integration of information systems and pre-trial diversion.

The remainder of the funds will be passed-through to local communities. About $2.2 million will benefit local governments through Maine Drug Enforcement Agency contracts. The rest of the funds are available to communities through two grant opportunities that require Requests for Proposals (RFPs). One RFP is currently available on the Department of Public Safety Web site at http://www.maine.gov/dps/cjg/byrne09rfp.html The other application process is expected to begin in mid-June.

Examples of programs that can be supported by JAG funds include: law enforcement; prosecution and court; prevention and education; corrections and community corrections; drug treatment; and technology improvement.

More information on the JAG grant process can be found athttp://www.maine.gov/dps/cjg/cjghomepage.htm

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Governor Recognizes Educators Working with At-Risk Youth

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Department of Education Commissioner Susan Gendron to recognize seven educators and other individuals who have made significant contributions to meeting the needs of children and youth who are at risk in their schools or communities. The seven individuals received Commissioner's Recognition Awards during a ceremony at the Blaine House.

"The people being recognized today have some important qualities in common," Governor Baldacci said. "Every day they give their time, energy and heart to the youth of Maine. They are the main reason why some youth stay in school or have re-engaged with school. And they do not accept failure in students, but collaborate with school and community members to create pathways of success and support along the way. These seven individuals are making a significant difference in the lives of many children."

The Office of Truancy, Dropout, and Alternative Education was established by the Maine Legislature in 1986. A 15-member Advisory Committee was established to advise the Commissioner of the Department of Education on policies and programs to address factors leading to youth dropping out of school.

The Commissioner's Recognition Awards Ceremony has been held as an annual event for nearly 20 years.

The list of award recipients follows:

Lillie Hanlon – Educator, Windham School Department, Real School

Sophie Payson – Educator, Portland High School Alternative Program

Nathan T. Larlee – Educator, Camden Hills Regional High School, Zenith Program

Keith Morang – Educator, Monmouth School Department

William E. "Bill" Davis – Educator, University of Maine

David Morris – Educator, Brewer School Department

David A. Hopkins – Civic Leader, MSAD #6

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Governor Applauds Grant for Biomedical Research

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today applauded the announcement of an $18 million grant from the National Center for Research Resources, part of the National Institutes of Health. The grant will allow for the continuation of the Maine IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), which is a network of 12 Maine research laboratories, universities and colleges, led by the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory in Bar Harbor.

"The growth of Maine's IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence is an extraordinary example of how Maine's commitment to research and development is paying off," Governor Baldacci said. "It is also clear that the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory is playing a key role in leading the State's transition into a vibrant, knowledge-based economy."

The Maine INBRE links the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory and The Jackson Laboratory with the University of Maine, College of the Atlantic; Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin Colleges; the University of Maine at Farmington, Fort Kent, Machias and Presque Isle; and Southern Maine Community College.

Since its inception in 2001, INBRE has provided hands-on technical training for nearly 700 Maine undergraduate students. Governor Baldacci told the story of Tobin Carson, who grew up on a dairy farm in Starks, Maine.

"At age 15, she announced her dream of going to medical school. Unfortunately, she was discouraged from pursuing that dream, being told, 'people like you don't go to places like that,'" Governor Baldacci said. "Not long after that, Tobin quit high school, feeling that it wasn't doing her any good. But she never stopped learning and her desire to go to medical school never faded. After her children were born, she got her GED certificate and enrolled in the University of Maine at Farmington full time as a biology major."

Governor Baldacci continued, "Tobin graduated at the age of 28 and has been working as a research technician at Lohmann Animal Health in Winslow. This fall, she will enroll as a full-time student at the College of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of New England."

The $18 million grant will be awarded over five years and will support 96 full-time research and administrative positions. An estimated 1,000 Maine undergraduate students will be trained as a result of the grant.

"INBRE is helping to create the technically skilled workforce and rich intellectual environment that will attract research-related industries seeking to relocate to our State," the Governor said. "INBRE is an investment in our future. It is an investment in Maine's most important resource – its people."

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Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on Monday, May 25

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – In remembrance, honor and deep respect for all of our servicemen and women who have given their lives for our freedom, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon on this Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, 2009. At noon, flags are to be raised to full-staff in honor of our nation's battle heroes.

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Governor Baldacci Celebrates Opening of Exhibit on Wabanaki Clothing and Textiles at Maine State Museum

May 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight joined First Lady Karen Baldacci, Maine tribal leaders, legislators and many others to celebrate the opening of a new exhibit featuring Wabanaki clothing and textiles at the Maine State Museum. "Uncommon Threads: Wabanaki Textiles, Clothing, and Costume" explores the textile arts of the Wabanakis, native people of Maine, southeastern Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.

"This is a special exhibit that puts the spotlight on the amazing art of the Wabanakis," Governor Baldacci said. "This museum is a true gem in the State of Maine and this exhibit is a very special part of the museum. We will all better appreciate the long tradition of artistry presented here for the first time in one place."

The exhibit spans 2,000 square feet in the museum and features touch stations and audio-visual presentations as well as artifacts, including women's peaked caps, chief's coats, beaded or appliquéd moccasins, many types of containers with beadwork or quillwork, and twined pieces such as bags, snowshoes and lacrosse sticks.

The Passamaquoddy Representative to the Maine State Legislator Donald Soctomah was also at the reception. Rep. Soctomah is a member of the exhibit team in addition to being a tribal historic preservation officer and an author of two books on Passamaquoddy history.

The exhibit will open to the public on Saturday, May 23, 2009. The Maine State Museum will be open on that day from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and admission will be free all day. Special curator-led tours will be given at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. The exhibit will remain at the Maine State Museum through May 2010, at which time it will travel to other museums in the United States and Canada.

The Maine State Museum is located adjacent to the State House in Augusta. The museum is open Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information on the Maine State Museum, call 207-287-2301 or visit the museum's Web site at www.mainestatemuseum.org.

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Governor Baldacci Discusses Cancer Prevention and Research

May 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today was presented with a copy of the book "Voices of Lung Cancer" in his office. The book is comprised of essays from patients, their friends, families and caregivers of people diagnosed with lung cancer. Some of the essay authors were in the Governor's Office to present him with the book.

"This is an important way to show our support for those fighting lung cancer, and for increasing awareness about the disease and the need to support critical research," Governor Baldacci said. "Through research, hard work and perseverance, we have made great strides in addressing this disease."

Governor Baldacci pointed to Maine's efforts to cut the exposure to secondhand smoke and to reduce teenage smoking by 50 percent as achievements in fighting cancer. The Governor said that a lot has been done, but the fight is far from over.

"My administration has been working to increase funding for biomedical research and development, including cancer research," the Governor said. "And through enhanced prevention measures and proper cancer education, we hope we will be able to keep people from getting sick in the first place."

The book was presented to Governor Baldacci by Debbie Violette and Dr. Deborah Morosini, two of the book's authors. Representatives from the book's publisher, LaChance Publishing, and a number of advocates were also in the Governor's Office for the presentation.

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Governor Baldacci Receives 2009 Down East Environmental Award

May 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today was presented with the 2009 Down East Environmental Award for the work that was done on the Sears Island Planning Initiative. The 31st annual award was presented by Down East magazine, books & online during a reception at the Blaine House in Augusta.

"The Sears Island Planning Initiative is very deserving of this award," Governor Baldacci said. "A lot was asked of this 46-member group. Many of those brought together had very strong feelings about what should – and should not – become of Sears Island. But it was clear to the participants that if we were able to break the impasse and truly reach consensus, then tremendous opportunities would result, benefitting all of Maine."

Governor Baldacci thanked the members of the Sears Island Planning Initiative, the Sears Island Joint Use Planning Committee, Searsport officials, members of the Transportation Committee, Transportation Commissioner David Cole, Karin Tilberg from the Governor's Office and many others for their work in ensuring the preservation of the Sears Island coastline while providing economic opportunities to Maine citizens.

"They put the best interests of the people of Maine first," the Governor said. "And for that, I commend them."

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Governor Baldacci Statement on Memorial Day

May 25, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement today on Memorial Day.

"This weekend, we honor the memory and the sacrifice of military men and women who have died in service to the United States of America. This grateful nation hasn't forgotten the millions of Americans who have fought to protect our country and its freedoms, and we never will. Some of those soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice while protecting this nation and our hearts go out to their families and friends.

"We must also remember that brave men and women continue to serve their country in war zones around the world. Every day, they do their duty. I am humbled by their dedication and commitment.

"On Memorial Day, flags will be lowered around Maine until Noon, in honor and tribute to America's fallen soldiers. Then the flags will be raised to the top of the staff until sunset, in honor of our country's war heroes.

"Maine is thankful to our heroes past and present. Time and time again, our soldiers have answered the call and stood ready to support the defense of our families, communities and country. So on this day, we remember them, we pray for them, and we pray for their families."

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Remove Bald Eagle from Endangered Species List

May 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 66, An Act To Amend Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List by Removing the Bald Eagle. The bill was ceremonially signed during a ceremony at Capitol Park with Lawrence the Bald Eagle present.

"When you look at this bald eagle, you really get a sense of strength, awe and beauty," Governor Baldacci said. "Those characteristics are a perfect representation of this great country."

Bill sponsor Sen. Bruce Bryant (D-Oxford) was in Capitol Park for the ceremony, as was his brother and co-sponsor, Rep. Mark Bryant (D-Windham), and a number of supporters of the legislation.

In the 1970s, only 20 nesting pairs of eagles lived in Maine and they were virtually the only ones left in the Northeast. Only one other pair lived in New York.

In 1978, the bald eagle was first recognized as an Endangered Species in Maine and 42 other states. Less than 10 years later, further action was taken in the Maine Legislature to protect the bald eagle and other Endangered Species in Maine. With the signing of LD 66, the bald eagle is the first species to be removed from this list.

Bald Eagle populations have been restored to more than 475 nesting pairs now in all 16 Maine counties. The legislation ceremonially signed today includes protections that ensure that the bald eagle population in Maine continues to thrive.

"Thanks to the work of State and federal agencies, the problem has been corrected over the past 30 years in Maine and throughout the country," the Governor said. "But the government agencies were not alone in their efforts. Conservation organizations, landowners who share their properties with eagles' nests and volunteer citizens helped out, and I would like to thank them for their commitment to this remarkable species."

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Governor's Statement on Passage of State Budget

May 27, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today after the Legislature approved the State budget for fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011.

"The Legislature has overcome a daunting task to overwhelmingly pass a responsible State budget during a time of great financial difficulty and uncertainty," Governor Baldacci said. "This is a hard budget, but the decisions made in it are necessary. The budget that passed today calls upon all Mainers to make sacrifices, but it also protects our most vulnerable citizens and positions our State for economic recovery."

"There is still much work to do, and we must keep a cautious eye on the State and national economy," Governor Baldacci said. "But if we can continue to approach the challenges facing the State with the same spirit of consensus and bipartisanship that guided the budget, we can meet any challenge."

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Governor Makes Presentation on Maine's Child Welfare Reform Initiative

May 27, 2009

CAMBRIDGE, MA – Governor John E. Baldacci today discussed Maine's Child Welfare Reform Initiative before the National Selection Committee for the Innovations in American Government Award. The award, given by the Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, will be presented in the fall to six programs nationally. Maine's Child Welfare Reform was chosen as one of sixteen initiatives to advance out of an original applicant pool of about 600 programs.

Governor Baldacci told the committee about Maine's success with Child Welfare Reform and the difference it has made in the lives of many Mainers.

"In every measure of child welfare, we are making significant progress," Governor Baldacci said. "Children are safer, and they are placed earlier and more often with families. Fewer children are in the foster care system, and of those who are, there's been a 67 percent drop in residential care. Savings from reduced residential care has been invested in community supports."

Governor Baldacci added that child placements with relatives have gone up. In 2003 an estimated 360 youth were placed with relatives and in 2008 that number increased to 508. More than half of the children who enter care in Maine are now placed directly with relatives.

"Through Family Team Meetings, children and their families have a voice and the needs of the child are clear and paramount," the Governor said. "Maine leads the nation in the percent of reduction of youth in foster care."

Governor Baldacci's presentation was followed by comments from Christine Cassella. Cassella is a parent who has had experience with child welfare in Maine. Her infant daughter was removed from her custody and placed with her mother for 10 and a half months. Today, Cassella says that her family is intact, sober and stronger than ever before thanks to her own hard work and the dedication of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

"Today, and everyday, I look back on my experience and think, not that I was short-changed by the system, or that my life was ruined by the stigma of child welfare, but rather that I needed help, and DHHS was there to give it," Cassella said. "In my eyes they are not the enemy, rather a trusted ally in my and my family's continued success."

Maine's Child Welfare Reform Initiative is also one of three finalists in the Innovations in American Government Award in Children and Family System Reform. The award is sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and focuses specifically on public policy innovation in the area of child and family services with a priority and emphasis on systemic reform. The winner of this award will receive a $100,000 grant to be used for replication activities.

For more details on the Innovations in American Government Award, visit the Ash Institute's Web site at: http://ashinstitute.harvard.edu/

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Governor Talks Budget with State Retirees

May 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning told State retirees that global economic instability required difficult choices in the budget he will sign later today, including impacts on current State employees.

"None of the options were easy," Governor Baldacci said of the budget. "That's why I felt it imperative to spread cuts fairly. At the same time, I did not want to increase the hardships faced on families by laying-off more State employees. And that's why, faced with the choices available to us, we asked State employees to make sacrifices."

The Governor addressed the more than 200 State retirees at the annual MSEA-SEIU Retirees Day at the Augusta Civic Center. Governor Baldacci told the group that he is proud of work done by all State employees, both active and retired.

"Whether it comes to protecting the environment, to providing education and information on health issues, to ensuring our critical infrastructure is running smoothly," the Governor said, "State employees contribute to the efficient running of State government and services."

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Governor Says Maine Continues to Excel with International Trade

May 28, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented awards during the luncheon portion of the 29th Annual Maine International Trade Day. The theme of this year's event was the World Economic Outlook, discussing concerns for the future of the economy in Maine, nationally and globally.

Governor Baldacci said that despite difficult economic times around the world, Maine continues to compete.

"Even in the global recession, Maine exported a record $3 billion last year," Governor Baldacci said. "That represents a 9.5 percent increase over 2007 and a 36 percent increase since 2003. Maine's reputation for quality is known worldwide and it continues to thrive despite this historic economic downturn."

International trade supports an estimated 143,000 jobs in Maine. More than 1,600 companies in Maine are active exporters.

The Governor said that trade missions conducted by the Maine International Trade Center have established connections between Maine businesses and international consumers that have produced solid results.

According to data from the Trade Center, gubernatorial and industry missions have resulted in more than $30 million of export sales in the past six years, including $6 million from last year's mission to Vancouver and Toronto. Maine's exports have increased by 36 percent since 2003.

"I have been impressed with the trade missions, the planning that goes in to them and the connections that are set up so that each and every participant gets face-to-face meetings and helpful information along the way," the Governor said. "As I have traveled with participants, I've learned a lot from them and have been impressed with their innovation and ability to market themselves globally."

Governor Baldacci also participated in presenting the following awards:

2009 Exporter of the Year: Elmet Technologies, Lewiston

2009 International Service Provider of the Year: A.N. Deringer, regional offices in Calais, Bangor, Jackman and Houlton

2009 International Innovator of the Year: Lee Academy

Maine's 2009 Foreign Direct Investor of the Year: Cooke Aquaculture, Blacks Harbour, New Brunswick

2009 Future Global Leader Award: Andrew Totman of Brunswick

2009 President's Award: Catherine Lee of Lee International, Westbrook

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Governor Discusses Role of Government with Fourth Graders

May 28, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited a group of about 40 students at the Asa Adams Elementary School in Orono to talk about the role of government at the local and State levels. The students in Sally Brooker's fourth-grade class asked the Governor a number of questions about topics like the challenges he experiences as Governor, whether or not he plans to run for President, legislation he has vetoed and what his childhood was like.

"I was very lucky," Governor Baldacci said, talking about his childhood. "I worked in the family restaurant with my seven brothers and sisters, my parents and my grandparents. My dad was involved with politics, and I had the opportunity to see President John F. Kennedy when he spoke at Bass Park. I feel very fortunate about being exposed to politics at a young age."

Governor Baldacci talked with the students about the Governor's role as head of State, the role of the Legislative branch and how people can get involved in government at any age.

"Anybody that tells you that you can't become President, you can't become Governor or you can't become a Congressman – they don't know what they're talking about," the Governor told the students. "If you believe and you have the drive and determination to put everything on the line, you can be anything you want to be."

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Governor Baldacci Signs State Budget

May 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has signed the State budget for fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011.

"Today's circumstances place demands on the Legislature that we haven't seen in generations," Governor Baldacci said. "From the first deliberation of the budget back during the winter to the final days of negotiations, there was every opportunity for Maine to become divided by self-interest and partisanship. But instead of giving into the path that has lured many of our colleagues in other States to gridlock and stalemate, Democrats and Republicans – conservatives and liberals, and folks in the middle – came together to pass a State budget that is fair, reasonable and responsible."

The Governor said that the budget forced difficult decisions to be made, but the sacrifice will be spread across the board.

"It asks State workers to do more with less, to sacrifice pay and benefits," the Governor said. "It asks counties and towns to stretch resources more, and make due with a small State subsidy. It reduces MaineCare and other important services that thousands of people rely upon. And government won't be able to provide the same level of services that many people have come to expect. There are difficult choices in this budget, but it also meets Maine's obligations."

The biennial budget reduces spending from the last two-year budget by $500 million, from $6.3 billion to $5.8 billion.

The budget passed with bipartisan support in the State Senate with 33 of 35 votes and in the House with 119 of 151 votes.

While signing the budget, Governor Baldacci praised the leadership in the House and Senate as well as the work of the Appropriations Committee for putting the interests of the people of Maine first.

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Governor Recognizes Fallen Maine Soldiers

May 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in a solemn ceremony to recognize fallen Maine soliders who have died in service since September 11, 2001.

During the dedication of a new Battlefield Cross Memorial, Governor Baldacci recognized the families of the 39 Maine soldiers who lost their lives since September 11, 2001. A list of the service members, the date of their death, place of death and home town are listed below.

"We can never say enough about these amazing individuals. Their loss is deeply felt, and has impacted our entire community," said the Governor. "Our Maine soldiers have always been our heroes. It is a great honor to be here today and to honor their sacrifice."

An identification tag for each fallen soldier was placed on the memorial, and an identical ID tag was presented to each family in a ceremonial box designed for today's dedication.

The inscription on the memorial reads:

State of Maine Global War on Terrorism Memorial

This Battlefield Cross stands as a lasting Tribute

"To those who have made the ultimate sacrifice from a grateful State"

Thank you for your willingness to serve our State and nation by answering the call to duty. With great pride, and deep sorrow we honor you for your sacrifice. You will be in our hearts and minds forever.

Dedicated May 2009

Those who have made the ultimate sacrifice since September 11, 2001

CDR Robert S. Schlegel Sep 11, 2001 Pentagon Gray

MSgt Evander E. Andrews Oct 10, 2001 Qatar Solon

LCDR Robert E. Clukey Nov 3, 2002 Adriatic Sea Orono

MAJ Jay T. Aubin Mar 20, 2003 Kuwait Waterville

SPC Daniel F.J. Cunningham Apr 4, 2003 Iraq Lewiston

ISG Christopher D. Coffin Jul 1, 2003 Iraq Kennebunk

SGT Nicholes D. Golding Feb 13, 2004 Afghanistan Addison

SPC Jeremiah J. Holmes Mar 29, 2004 Iraq North Berwick

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SGT Christopher D. Gelineau Apr 20, 2004 Iraq Portland

SGT Lawrence A. Roukey Apr 26, 2004 Iraq Westbrook

SPC Beau R. Beaulieu May 24, 2004 Iraq Lisbon

CPT Daniel J. Tranchemontagne May 30, 2004 Kuwait-WRAMC Portland

SSG Lynn R. Poulin Dec 21, 2004 Iraq Freedom

SGT Thomas J. Dostie Dec 21, 2004 Iraq Somerville

1SG Michael D. Jones Mar 3, 2005 Iraq-NY Unity

SFC Shawn C. Dostie Dec 30, 2005 Iraq Lewiston

SPC Joshua U. Humble Feb 26, 2006 Iraq Appleton

SGT Corey A. Dan Mar 13, 2006 Iraq Norway

SPC Dustin J. Harris Apr 6, 2006 Iraq Patten

SSG Dale J. Kelley Jr May 6, 2006 Iraq Richmond

SSG David M. Veverka May 6, 2006 Iraq Orono

CPT Patrick D. Damon Jun 15, 2006 Afghanistan Falmouth

PFC Andrew R. Small Aug 11, 2006 Afghanistan Wiscassett

1LT Benjamin D. Keating Nov 26, 2006 Afghanistan Shapleigh

CPL Dustin J. Libby Dec 6, 2006 Iraq Presque Isle

SSG Kristofer R. Ciraso Dec 7, 2006 Iraq Bangor

SSG Eric Ross Feb 9, 2007 Iraq Kenduskeag

LCpl Angel Rosa Mar 13, 2007 Iraq South Portland

SGT Jason W. Swiger Mar 25, 2007 Iraq South Portland

SGT Edmund W. McDonald Mar 28, 2007 Afghanistan Casco

SPC Christopher M. Wilson Mar 29, 2007 Afghanistan Bangor

SGT Richard K. Parker Jun 14, 2007 Iraq Phillips

SGT Joel A. House Jun 23, 2007 Iraq Lee

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SPC Jason E. Dore Jul 8, 2007 Iraq Moscow

SGT Blair W. Emery Nov 30, 2007 Iraq Lee

SFC Jonathan A. Lowery Dec 14, 2007 Iraq Houlton

PFC Tyler J. Smith Mar 21, 2008 Iraq Bethel

SGT Nicholas A. Robertson Apr 3, 2008 Afghanistan Old Town

SPC Justin L. Buxbaum May 26, 2008 Afghanistan South Portland

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Governor Baldacci Honors Maine Sports Hall of Fame Inductees

May 31, 2009

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today honored nine men and women with ties to Maine sports for being inducted into the Maine Sports Hall of Fame. More than 300 people were at the ceremony, including many past inductees and former standout Maine athletes like former New England Patriots Coach Dick MacPherson, former New York Yankees Coach Stump Merrill and former University of Maine basketball player and Coach Skip Chappelle.

"I was lucky growing up being able to watch a number of great athletes and there are several of them in this room today," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has a proud sports tradition and the proof of it exists in the stories of the men and women in the Maine Sports Hall of Fame."

In addition to the inductees, the Maine Sports Hall of Fame awarded the President's Award to Marvin Bolduc for his work as director and treasurer of the organization for nearly three decades. Also, 10 student athletes were given $1,500 scholarships for their athletic and academic achievements throughout high school.

"Kids today want to know who to look up to," the Governor said. "The people who are gathered here today are a good start. You can be from Maine and succeed like the people in this room, but you have to believe in yourself. If you're from Maine and you work hard and believe in yourself, you can go anywhere and do anything you want to do, just like people here have done."

The list of honorees is below:

Inductions: - Cindy Blodgett - John "Jack" Butterfield (posthumously)- George Hale- Robert Kelley- Jon MacDonald- Peter McCarty- Charles "Sam" Pendleton- Ken Perrone- Dick Scott

President's Award- Marvin Bolduc

Scholar Athlete Awards - Elise Begin – Forest Hills High School- Wade Davis – Hall-Dale High School- Abigail Downs – Edward Little High School- John Gilboy – Thornton Academy- Matthew Harvey – Community High School of Fort Kent- Adelene Hills – Belfast High School- Ryan Larochelle – Bangor High School- Mary Lewis – St. Dominic High School- Casey Monaghan – Portland High School- Ryan Nadeau – Brewer High School

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Expand Community Response to Domestic Violence

June 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 324, "An Act To Allow Limited Information Sharing in Domestic Violence Cases." The legislation, originally signed by the Governor May 21, provides for certain information about domestic violence cases to be shared with advocates for the purpose of aiding victims.

"This is a voluntary program and one that has strict requirements on what and how information is used so that we can both have a greater impact on assisting victims while protecting sensitive information about their case," said Governor Baldacci. "I want to thank those who worked so hard on this bill, including its sponsor Rep. Anne Haskell (D-Portland), Commissioner Anne Jordan of the Maine Department of Public Safety and domestic violence advocacy organizations."

The bill calls for law enforcement agencies to work with domestic violence advocacy organizations to develop coordinated responses to help victims. There are prohibitions, strengthened by penalties, against the sharing of confidential information or information related to the investigation of an alleged crime.

Following a law passed in the last Legislative session, the Maine Department of Public Safety last year held a series of community forums and meetings with stakeholders to review the supports and protections available to victims of domestic violence. The Department's report, released in February, can be found online at http://www.maine.gov/dps/Docs/LD%201990%20Report.pdf

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Support Sustainable Biofuel Projects

June 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 389, "An Act to Facilitate the State's Existing Commitment to the Production of Liquid Biofuels." Representative Steven Butterfield (D-Bangor), sponsor of the legislation, attended today's bill signing.

The bill continues the State's efforts to encourage the development and use of sustainable biofuels through the existing tool of the Clean Fuel Vehicle Fund. In addition, the Secretary of State may develop and administer an online, voluntary way for people to contribute to the Fund.

"We are proud of the role Maine has taken in pursuing clean, renewable energy," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration has been working to ensure that we build strong public-private partnerships to expand home-grown energy, including biofuels."

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Governor Celebrates Literacy Volunteers of Bangor

June 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in the 40th Anniversary of Literacy Volunteers of Bangor. Through a group of dedicated volunteer tutors, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor helps area residents who have difficulty reading.

Literacy Volunteers of Bangor was begun in 1969 by Sister Mary Benigna and Agnes Beckwith. The women formed the first affiliate outside of Syracuse, N.Y., the birthplace of Literacy Volunteers of America. The national organization was begun by Ruth Colvin, now 93 years old, who via taped message provided a keynote address to those assembled at this evening's event.

"The staff, tutors and volunteers of Literacy Volunteers of Bangor have opened up a new world for those who have struggled with literacy issues," said Governor Baldacci. "They've empowered those they have served. I have seen personally the difference it makes for adults who have been helped by Literacy Volunteers of Bangor, and I know that literacy is an essential life skill that impacts our State's economic development potential and well-being."

The event hosted by Husson University recognized inspirational tutors and students, as well as pioneers of Literacy Volunteers of Bangor. First Lady Karen Baldacci was honored for her work on a public service announcement for the organization. Maine Poet Laureate Betsy Sholl also participated in the anniversary celebration.

Governor Baldacci presented a Proclamation recognizing June 2, 2009 as Literacy Volunteers of Bangor Day. The text of the proclamation follows below.

WHEREAS, according to the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy Survey, 22% of Maine adults function at the lowest levels of literacy with 43% of these adults living in poverty; and

WHEREAS, the difficulties associated with low literacy levels are passed from generation to generation; and

WHEREAS, in the majority of cases, a direct correlation between low literacy, low educational attainment, and low income exists; and

WHEREAS, 70% of people in prison read at a 4th grade level or lower; and

WHEREAS, proficiency in literacy provides people with access to a full range of economic, educational, social, and personal opportunities: and

WHEREAS, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor (LV-Bangor) provides basic literacy, family literacy, prison literacy, and English language learner programs to adults in the greater Bangor area, and

WHEREAS, LV-Bangor's 250-plus volunteers contribute more than 15,000 hours of no-cost services to these programs; and

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WHEREAS, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor, founded in 1969 as the first Literacy Volunteers of America affiliate in the state of Maine, celebrates 40 years of continuous service to its community in 2009,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim June 2, 2009 as

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF BANGOR DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Help Nursing Mothers

June 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 373, An Act To Facilitate Lactation at the Workplace by New Mothers. Rep. Melissa Walsh Innes (D-Yarmouth) sponsored the legislation, which passed without opposition in the House and Senate.

"This bill is important because it will support mothers who are choosing to both return to work and provide the best nutrition for their children," Governor Baldacci said. "It will ensure that working, new mothers can come back to work after childbirth with dignity and professionalism."

The law states that employers shall provide break time each day to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to three years after the child's birth. The employer must also make reasonable efforts to provide a private, clean room for the employee.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremony by Rep. Walsh Innes, and other supporters and advocates of the legislation.

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Governor Baldacci Vetoes Bill that Would Have Repealed Legal Presence Requirement for Maine Credentials

June 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today vetoed LD 1357, a bill that would have undermined the security of Maine credentials.

"I am enclosing LD 1357, An Act to Protect the Privacy of Maine Residents Under the Driver's License Laws, which I am vetoing pursuant to Art. IV, Part III, Section 2 of the State Constitution."

"Last year, Maine took important steps to improve the security of its driver's license and identification cards. The Legislature passed and I signed into law new provisions that require applicants to demonstrate that they are residents of the State and that they are either U.S. Citizens or legally present in the country," Governor Baldacci wrote in his veto message to the Legislature.

"LD 1357 would repeal the legal presence requirement and allow Maine driver's licenses and identification cards to be issued to people who are knowingly breaking immigration law."

"Maine's current law is fair and reasonable. Forty-six states, including every state in New England, have a legal presence requirement for its credentials. Before last year's actions to increase the security of State credentials, Maine had become a target for unscrupulous individuals looking to circumvent legal presence requirements in other states. People were trucked in, in some cases by the van load, to get driver's licenses that would help them break the law elsewhere. With the protections put in place last year, such activities are much more difficult."

"Maine cannot and should not be an island unto itself."

"While proponents of LD 1357 have argued that the repeal effort would protect the privacy of Maine residents, the case has been overstated. The law, as it stands today, does not mandate the use of finger prints or facial image scans, or other biometric means, as part of the process to receive a driver's license. Current law only requires the Secretary of State to study the use of new technologies to determine the best way to reduce the risk of fraud and identity theft in the issuance of Maine credentials. Furthermore, the current law does not allow the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles to participate in a national REAL ID database, where information from our State would be consolidated with information from other states. No such database exists, and if it did, Maine law does not allow participation."

"Improving the security of Maine credentials was part of an arrangement made last year with the federal Department of Homeland Security. Maine's credentials fell short of federal security standards and put at risk the ability of Maine residents to use their driver's license as acceptable identification to board a commercial airline or enter a federal building. If Maine were to repeal its current law, Maine residents could face secondary screening and be singled out for additional scrutiny every time they fly or go to a federal courthouse. That is unacceptable to me."

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"I understand that there are serious concerns about the federal REAL ID law and its implications on personal privacy. The Obama Administration has shown a willingness to reform the REAL ID law and is working with the National Governors Association to revise many of the policy areas related to privacy. While the revisions continue to be refined, it appears from information currently available that the legal presence requirement will remain part of federal statute. We should not rush to make changes in Maine law that would place us in conflict with the new president or threaten the strength and security of Maine credentials. Instead, we should work with the Obama Administration and the National Governors Association to improve the security of Maine's credentials while protecting personal privacy."

"I understand that there are people who have been inconvenienced by Maine's new security standards. For some people, the process of renewing their driver's license has become more difficult. But those examples don't mean that the law is unreasonable or unworkable. Maine law gives great discretion to the Secretary of State to address individual circumstances that might make receiving a driver's license unusually burdensome. Anecdotal evidence is not enough reason to overturn current law."

"Maine's legal presence requirement is reasonable and justified. I do not believe that Maine should issue driver's licenses to people who are not in the country legally. A driver's license is more than just a license to drive a car. It is an official credential that is used for many other purposes and which can be misused by someone in the country illegally. To change Maine's law unnecessarily puts at risk the integrity of State-issued credentials."

"With these concerns and commitments, I hearby veto LD 1357 and respectfully urge you to sustain it."

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Reduce Customer Costs for Northern Maine Utilities

June 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 844, An Act To Reduce Costs for Customers of Northern Maine Consumer Owned Utilities. The law allows consumer-owned electric utilities in northern Maine to sell their excess electricity.

"Having this ability to sell excess electricity will enable the utility to offset operational costs and thus save consumers money," Governor Baldacci said. "My Administration has been looking for some time to connect Aroostook County to the rest of the New England grid. In the interim, this is a common-sense way to ensure that utilities in The County can reduce costs to consumers."

Some of the utilities the law will allow to sell the excess generation of electricity include Eastern Maine Cooperative, Houlton Water Company and Van Buren Light and Power.

Bill sponsor Rep. Richard Cleary (D-Houlton) was at the ceremonial signing along with a number of co-sponsors and supporters.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Amend Petroleum Market Share Act

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 566, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Market Share Act. The law amends the Petroleum Market Share Act to require the Attorney General to report to the Legislature describing the concentration of retail petroleum outlets in the State every two years. In the original Act, the Attorney General was required to issue the report annually.

"This bill streamlines the reporting process of the concentration of gas stations in the State," Governor Baldacci said. "The Legislature and the Attorney General devised this legislation to reduce the frequency of reporting, all while ensuring the public remains well-served by the intent of the Petroleum Market Share Act."

The bill's sponsor Rep. Robert Hunt (D-Buxton) was at the ceremonial signing, as was Attorney General Janet Mills and co-sponsors of the legislation.

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Governor Baldacci Congratulates 2009 Clean Water Week Poster Contest Winners

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today congratulated three students for being selected as the winners of the 2009 Maine Wastewater Control Association Clean Water Week Poster Contest. The theme of the competition was "What Clean Water Means to Me."

The contest generated more than 70 entries from schools throughout the State. Governor Baldacci congratulated the students for being chosen as finalists.

"I can see the thought and hard work that have gone into your artwork," Governor Baldacci told the students. "You represent the other students and schools who have entered this contest very well, and I hope that you continue to show others the importance of clean water to our State and country."

First place went to Monica Hurst, a 7th-grade student at Central Middle School in Corinth; second place went to Lauralee Yount, a 5th-grade student at Morison Memorial School in Corinth; and third place went to Madison Cutten, a 6th-grade student at Jordan Small Middle School in Raymond.

All three students received cash prizes for being finalists in the contest. The first place winner received $200, second place received $100 and third place received $50.

Governor Baldacci was presented with a framed copy of the first-place poster by Monica Hurst for the Governor's Office.

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Governor Signs Ocean Energy Legislation

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1465, An Act To Facilitate Testing and Demonstration of Renewable Ocean Energy Technology. The Governor's bill, sponsored by Senator Barry Hobbins, establishes a streamlined permit process for companies that want to test promising new renewable ocean energy technologies in appropriate sites in the Gulf of Maine. Up to five such sites will be selected by Dec. 15, 2009.

"Maine is a leader in promoting development of clean, renewable energy," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine's resources, including our ocean, give us great strength in competing for research dollars and attracting private energy development companies. But we know competition for these dollars and jobs is fierce. This legislation was necessary to notify the world of Maine's incredible wind resource."

The Governor said he will be taking this message to U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu tomorrow in Washington, D.C. The Governor will be joined in the meeting by Senator Olympia Snowe, Senator Susan Collins, Congressman Mike Michaud, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and Habib Dagher of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center at the University of Maine. The State is seeking to become a national center for research and development in offshore wind energy.

In addition to the legislation signed into law today, the Governor will make the case that Maine is the ideal place for Federal investment in an offshore wind power demonstration and testing site.

"While other states are talking about the potential for wind power, Maine is already in a leadership role," said Governor Baldacci. "We have deep water access only three miles offshore. We have a world class center at the University of Maine under the leadership of Habib Dagher. In less than two weeks, Maine will be hosting an international Energy Ocean Conference that will bring more than 350 scientists, policymakers and financiers to Maine. And there is strong bipartisan support for $7.5 million in the bond package I proposed for a demonstration site."

The legislation signed today directs a site, termed the Maine Offshore Wind Energy Research Center, to be for wind energy demonstration projects conducted by or in cooperation with wind energy technology researchers at the University of Maine.

The Ocean Energy Task Force will work to identify the sites called for in the legislation as well as review and amend as necessary our existing permitting requirements for offshore wind projects that are commercially viable today. In Addition, the Task Force will continue its work to promote research and testing to encourage alternative energy related businesses in Maine.

LD 1465 passed without opposition in both houses of the Maine Legislature. The Governor credited the large number of stakeholders, including his Ocean Energy Task Force and state legislators, who worked hard to reach a consensus. The law went into effect with the Governor's signing of the emergency legislation.

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The Governor said, "Our clean, renewable ocean energy resources will help us end our oil and gas dependence, which is costing us billions of dollars every year -- 100 percent of which goes out of state and overseas -- and that is changing our climate in fundamental and often detrimental ways. This kind of investment will create jobs and help to expand Maine's economy."

For more information on the Ocean Energy Task Force, including its membership, duties as outlined by the Governor's Executive Order creating it, and interim report, please visit http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/OETF/

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Governor Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Fund for a Healthy Maine

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized an enthusiastic group of Legislators, health care advocates, public health officials and others gathered at the State House to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Fund for a Healthy Maine. The Fund was created by the Legislature to be the instrument to collect and disperse Federal tobacco settlement monies. Maine has been consistently recognized for the high rate of use of the funds for its originally intended purpose, to fund prevention and health care promotion.

"The great success of the Fund for a Healthy Maine is a result of the partnerships that are represented here, the people who are working every day in their communities to improve public health," said Governor Baldacci. "We know prevention works and that is why my Administration has supported the Fund for a Healthy Maine as a foundation for wellness and other health promotion efforts."

The Governor said that chronic disease makes up 75 percent of the $8 billion a year that Mainers spend on health care - disease and costs that can be easily prevented. A small portion of the funds also support access initiatives for the uninsured.

"The Fund for a Healthy Maine is a legacy that has helped thousands of Mainers live healthier, longer lives," said the Governor.

The Governor issued a proclamation recognizing June 4, 2009, as Fund for a Healthy Maine 10th Anniversary Day. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, in 1998 the State of Maine and 45 other states agreed to settle a lawsuit against the major tobacco companies over smoking-related Medicaid expenses; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 the Maine Legislature established the Fund for a Healthy Maine to support tobacco use prevention efforts and other health improvement initiatives through the use of the settlement dollars; and

WHEREAS, Maine has been and continues to be recognized as a national leader in the use of the settlement funds for disease prevention and health promotion; and

WHEREAS, the Fund for a Healthy Maine's purpose has been supported by two Governors and through five Legislative sessions; and

WHEREAS, the Fund has produced substantial positive impact, including but not limited to a significant decline in youth and adult smoking rates,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim June 4, 2009 as

FUND FOR A HEALTHY MAINE

10TH ANNIVERSARY DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Promote Telecommunications Availability

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today was joined by bill sponsor, Rep. Joseph Wagner (D-Lymon), as he ceremonially signed LD 766, An Act to Promote Telecommunications Availability for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The law provides critical updates in language to the existing statutes governing the services made available to those who are hard of hearing.

"Technology has changed greatly in the past few years," Governor Baldacci said. "These changes in the law are needed to ensure that those hard of hearing or deaf may have access to newer methods of communications."

The law will go into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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First Lady Recognizes Keeping Maine's Children Connected Awardees

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – First Lady Karen M. Baldacci, chair of Keeping Maine's Children Connected Advisory Committee, today recognized youth and adults involved in the initiative to encourage kids to complete their education. The program aims to improve educational outcomes for youth whose schooling is disrupted because of homelessness, hospitalization, incarceration, foster care placement or other factors.

"This initiative recognizes that instability in a child's life puts great pressure on their focus and ability to maintain their schoolwork," said the First Lady. "Keeping Maine's Children Connected helps bring dedicated individuals together to ensure that no child falls through the cracks."

The First Lady presented awards to eight youth who have completed their education in the face of great adversity. In addition, four individuals and one group will receive awards for providing leadership in helping young people achieve their dreams.

"These awards are a unique opportunity to acknowledge those individuals who go above and beyond their jobs to support Maine's youth as well as to acknowledge youth who have persevered in their lives to continue their education," said Susan Lieberman, Director of Keeping Maine's Children Connected.

Eight Maine youth were recognized and acknowledged as young adults who inspire others with their dedication and perseverance to complete their education despite the many challenges they face. They are from all over the State, from Aroostook to York County, and include: Candace Fleury, a student at Southern Maine Community College; Danielle Young, a student at Lake Region High School; Charity Axe, a student at Carleton Project in Houlton; Julia Miles, a student at University of Augusta at Bangor; and Jeremiah Dumais, a student at Messalonskee High School.

Individuals are acknowledged for their extraordinary efforts and leadership in ensuring that all youth have the necessary tools and the opportunity to complete their education and achieve their dreams. This year's "Great People Who Rock" are: Sara Meerse, a lawyer with Kid's Legal, a statewide project at Pine Tree Legal Assistance; Ann Roach, Guidance Counselor with SAD #37; Mary Seaman, a Homeless Coordinator at Lewiston high School; and Tony Veit, Case Manager at Youth and Family Services, Inc. based in Skowhegan.

Sanford School community members Doug Roberts, Officer Mike Gordon and Officer Tipper Thornton were the recipients of the "Great Team Who Rocks" award for their collaborative, strength-building work creating positive change for youth in their community.

In addition to their recognition, three of the youth honored received $200 educational scholarships made possible by grants provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maine and Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution.

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"As a mutual community bank, we are very committed to supporting education, and more importantly, programs that involve the youth in our communities," said Donald Lauzier, Vice President of Community Relations at Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution. "We are extremely proud of the young people who have embraced this program to make a better life for themselves," adds Lauzier.

Keeping Maine's Children Connected is an initiative of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, which is also chaired by the First Lady.

For more information, visit http://www.maine.gov/education/speced/kmcc/index.htm

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Amend Employment Practices Law Regarding Substance Abuse Testing

June 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 549, An Act to Amend the Employment Practices Law Regarding Substance Abuse Testing. The law amends the Employment Practices Law to broaden screening test options for employers who have drug-free workplace programs.

"Substance abuse is a major public health problem that affects Maine's citizens, communities and businesses," Governor Baldacci said. "It has huge medical, social and economic costs, including medical care and emergency room visits, lost productivity in the workplace, judicial and corrections costs, as well as lost lives."

According to the Maine Office of Substance Abuse, data on cost savings of Employee Assistance Programs shows that for every dollar spent on prevention efforts, there can be $15 in savings.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Carol Weston (R-Waldo), was at the ceremonial signing, as were co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

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Governor, Maine Congressional Delegation Meet with U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu

June 5, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Governor John Baldacci joined Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Representatives Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree at a meeting with Energy Secretary Steven Chu this morning at the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C. to propose a National Deepwater Offshore Wind Research Center to be operated by the University of Maine. Dr. Habib Dagher, UMaine Professor and Director of the Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center, also attended the meeting in Secretary Chu's office.

After the meeting, the Governor and Congressional Delegation issued the following statement:

"Today we presented Secretary Chu with an ambitious proposal for a National Deepwater Offshore Wind Research Center to be operated by the University of Maine. Maine has the natural resources, the technology, the skills and the hard-working people to become a world leader in wind energy. Locating a National Deepwater Research Center in Maine will give our state a big advantage in the race to develop deepwater, offshore wind energy."

The Governor and Congressional Delegation asked Secretary Chu to allocate $20 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the first year of the project, and asked him to support additional Congressional funding over the next four years. The goal of the National Deepwater Offshore Wind Research Center would be to enable the design and testing of a large scale floating offshore wind platform that could serve as the basis of a large-scale offshore wind industry.

The Research Center would include a facility at the University of Maine as well as a coastal and offshore test facility.

Maine is particularly well-suited as a site for a Wind Research Center for a number of reasons:

• Legislation signed by the Governor and ongoing wind power developments show Maine's commitment to developing wind power.
• The University of Maine's Composites Lab has become a national leader in the technology needed to build offshore wind power.
• Maine also has a significant portion of the nation's wind resources off the coast and more deep water closer to shore than any other East Coast state.• The men and women who work in Maine's boatbuilding, shipbuilding and commercial fishing industries can use their skills and experience to build offshore wind power.

"Maine has what it will take to develop the technology and build the large, floating structures that will be needed for an offshore wind industry," the group said. "This is an opportunity for Maine to lead the nation in developing a new source of clean, renewable energy."

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Governor Commemorates 25th Anniversary of Saxl Park

June 6, 2009

BANGOR - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Congressman Michael Michaud, members of the Saxl family and several local officials to commemorate the 25th anniversary and re-dedication of Saxl Park. The park is located on the grounds of the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center and has served for home and practice fields for John Bapst High School and regional cross country meets for schools throughout Eastern Maine. The park also has walking trails for the community-at-large.

"Saxl Park is a treasure," Governor Baldacci said. "It has grown over the years and has become a multi-purpose park, serving young and old. I am sure that the continued commitment and support of the people here and those to follow will allow Saxl Park to flourish for generations to come."

The State – through Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center and Eastern Maine Community College – is in the process of developing a Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Bangor to create a trail connection between the campuses and Cascade Park to create the first official segment of the Bangor Trail System.

Saxl Park is named for Joseph Saxl, Bangor Mental Health Institute Superintendent from 1974-1981. The land was originally used for farming, but became overgrown due to a lack of care. Mr. Saxl began the thought process of a recreational park on the land for both patients and the community. When Mr. Saxl died, the idea took hold to plan and build the park as a tribute to him. In 1984, the plot of land on the BMHI grounds was formally designated as Saxl Park.

Governor Baldacci praised the volunteers and community members for maintaining the parks beauty and availability for patients and residents alike.

"Thousands of volunteer hours, along with thousands of contributions in service, and in materials, have gone into Saxl Park," the Governor said. "This park exemplifies the fulfillment of an idea whose time had come. The park, with its wildlife, walking trails and athletic fields, continues to be an integral part of the Bangor community."

For more information on Saxl Park, visit http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/DDPC/saxl-park.shtml

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Governor Baldacci Signs Offensive Place Names Legislation

June 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 797, An Act To Fully Implement the Legislative Intent in Prohibiting Offensive Place Names.

The legislation updates a law, originally passed in 2001, prohibiting offensive place names. The original law defined an "offensive name" as the name of a place that includes offensive terminology in its title, such as "squaw." The new law accounts for other spellings of the words, such as "squa."

"Among the many things that stand out about Maine – whether you are from here or have come to visit – is that we are a welcoming community," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine people have time and time again supported tolerance and respect for others. Every Maine person and every Maine community deserves to be treated with dignity."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Wayne Mitchell (Penobscot Nation) and co-sponsors of the legislation.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation Establishing the Civil Violation of Motor Vehicle Violation Resulting in Death

June 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 441, An Act To Establish the Civil Violation of Motor Vehicle Violation Resulting in Death.

The law creates a civil violation when a traffic infraction causes a death, filling a gap in between a Class A crime and no penalty for such infractions. The penalties under the law require a minimum 14-day loss of license, with the discretion of the judge to increase that to four years. It also gives the judge the discretion to impose a fine of up to $5,000 and community service work.

"This bill makes sense," Governor Baldacci said. "We have gone too long without a set penalty for a traffic infraction that results in death. This legislation gives our judicial system the tools to impose the appropriate penalty when such an unfortunate event occurs."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Patsy Crockett (D-Augusta) and co-sponsors of the legislation. District Attorney Evert Fowle was also at the ceremony, as were two families who have helped to move the legislation forward. Mark and Wanda Heim, and Rebecca and Parrish Renaud – parents of children who were lost in separate traffic accidents – worked on the bill and were in the Governor's Office for the ceremonial signing.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Baldacci Awards Six Students State Police Memorial Scholarships

June 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated six students from around Maine for being awarded State Police Memorial Scholarships. The Governor presented the students with their awards Monday morning in the Governor's Office.

"Congratulations to all of you and your families," Governor Baldacci told the scholarship recipients. "I appreciate the pride, professionalism, integrity and compassion that the State Police have in the way they operate. It's important that we have this scholarship program, allowing us to give back to the families of the men and women of the State Police."

Receiving a share of $7,500 in scholarships were Kayla Marks, graduate of Gardiner High School, who will attend Northeastern University; Ian Nichols, graduate of North Yarmouth Academy, who will attend Hamilton College; Kimberly LeClair, graduate of Thornton Academy, who will attend the University of Maine Orono; Alina Wright, graduate of Erskine Academy, who will attend Norwich University; Jacob Ferland, graduate of Mattanawcook Academy, who will attend Husson University; and Chelsea Scott, graduate of Medomak Valley High School, who will attend Southern Maine Community College.

The scholarships are awarded to children of an active, retired, or deceased State Trooper. Students who are going into their first year of college are invited to apply for the scholarships. Six awardees are then chosen for the scholarships based on academic standing and other criteria by a scholarship board.

This is the 26th year of the Maine State Police Memorial Scholarships.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Worker Training Legislation

June 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1474, An Act To Assist Maine Workers and Businesses in Succeeding in a Changing Economy.

The law makes worker training more accessible to those laid off from their jobs. Through the law, training is no longer contingent on the closure of a business. Instead, anyone who is laid off as a result of a reduction in operations at their place of employment is qualified for training. Also, the law eliminates the limit of one training program in a lifetime.

"Maine workers and businesses are hurting," Governor Baldacci said. "No sector is immune from the impact of the global recession. This bill is important because it makes training more accessible to people who have been laid off."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor House Speaker Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven) and co-sponsors of the legislation.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill for First Responders' Mutual Aid

June 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 847, An Act Authorizing Statewide Mutual Aid Among First Responder Agencies. The law allows local first responder agencies to provide emergency services such as fire, law enforcement, emergency management or medical services as necessary upon another town's request without any additional agreement or contract. Communities may opt out of the agreement if they desire.

"This is another example of communities working together for the greater good of the people of our State," Governor Baldacci said. "When an emergency occurs, we all pull together and help each other out. Now local emergency agencies can work seamlessly with neighboring towns to provide services when an emergency situation arises. This will improve efficiency and allow our first responders to respond quickly to emergencies that affect their areas."

Bill sponsor Rep. Anne Haskell (D-Portland) was at the ceremonial signing along supporters and first responders.

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Governor and Maine Technology Institute Announce $25 Million in Maine Technology Asset Fund Awards

June 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Maine Technology Institute (MTI) President Betsy Biemann today announced that the MTI Board of Directors has approved a total of $25 million in awards to 16 applicants across Maine. Legislators and representatives from organizations receiving the awards attended the State House event to release the list.

"The Maine Technology Asset Fund illustrates Maine's strong commitment to stimulating the State's innovation economy and expanding the infrastructure that supports high-tech research and development,"Governor Baldacci said. "These projects will leverage another $40 million investment into the Maine innovation economy."

Awards covered projects that are located from Portland to Presque Isle to Bar Harbor in all seven of Maine's technology sectors and will help to develop technologies that build on traditional Maine industries in aquaculture, forestry, and agriculture, as well as genetics, nanotechnology, global positioning, high-resolution imaging, and ceramics and composites.

In November 2007, voters of the State of Maine approved $50 million in bond funds to finance capital assets to help individual companies and research organizations, as well as collaborative efforts among them, move new technologies along the research and development (R&D) path to the market and benefit the Maine economy. MTI manages the Maine Technology Asset Fund (MTAF) and the award process.

This is the second of two rounds of competitive awards from the Maine Technology Asset Fund. The first set of awards were handed out in August of last year.

"The Maine Technology Asset Fund awards will serve Maine's economy by funding cutting-edge technology development in some of Maine's most entrepreneurial companies and research organizations," said Betsy Biemann. "We were extremely impressed with the breadth and competitiveness of the applicant pool overall, and of this group of award winners.

The reviewer panel scored and then rank ordered applications according to the following criteria: Economic Growth and Impact, Scientific or Engineering Merit and Feasibility, Team and Institutional Merit and Commitment, Relevance to Maine's Innovation Economy Needs and Collaboration. The MTI Board approved the top-ranked 16 applicants for the remaining half of the total MTAF funds.

MTI was created by the Legislature in 1999 to stimulate and support research and development activity leading to the commercialization of new products and services in the state's technology-intensive industrial sectors. Programs are designed to enhance the competitive position of those sectors and increase the likelihood that one or more of the sectors will support clusters of industrial activity and create new jobs.

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The list of award recipients and their projects follow. For more information on the award recipients and their projects, please visit Maine Technology Institute's Web site, www.mainetechnology.org.

AWARD RECIPIENTS FOR THE SECOND ROUND OF THE MAINE TECHNOLOGY ASSET FUND

University of Maine at Presque Isle, Advanced Geospatial Information Mapping Facility in Northern Maine, Presque Isle, $96,800

University of Maine, Process Development Center Infrastructure Improvement, Orono, $1,083,197

Maine Institute for Human Genetics and Health, Maine Regional Flow Cytometry Collaborative, Brewer, $1,247,875

Hodgdon Defense Composites, A World Class Composite Materials Shipyard & Manufacturing Complex, Portland, $3,874,719

University of Maine, Maine Innovative Industries Initiative, Orono, $3,690,000

University of Maine, Maine Center for Autonomous Marine Survey, Orono, $1,283,822

Seldon Technologies, Manufacturing Nanocomposite Material for Structural and Filtration Applications, Windsor, VT (establishing a facility in Old Town), $575,409

ORPC Maine, OCGen Turbine Generator Unit Commercialization, Portland, $806,138

Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Hydroacoustic Equipment for Herring Surveys in the Gulf of Maine, Portland, $543,750

Dielectric Communications, A New Design for Universal Rural Wireless Connectivity to Fixed and Mobile Users, Raymond, $2,200,000

University of New England, Animal Facilities to Enhance Translational Neuroscience & Pharmacology Research, $1,533,929

Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, Improvements to Maine's Aquaculture Business Incubation Infrastructure, Orono, $213,900

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, Center for Blue Biotechnology, West Boothbay Harbor, $4,453,971

Ascendant Energy Company, A Solar Center for Excellence: Advanced Photovoltaic Production Facility, Rockland, $575,408

The Jackson Laboratory, Solidifying The Jackson Laboratory's Position in the Emerging Biomedical Market, Bar Harbor, $2,137,429

University of Maine, Strengthening Biotechnology & Supporting the STEM Education Initiative in Maine, $883,160

Total: $25,199,507

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Governor Presents Plan to Address Revenue Decline

June 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his plans to close a projected revenue decline for the remaining two months of fiscal year 2009.

"Last month, I signed into a law a State budget that reduced spending by $500 million and that made important structural changes to Maine's government," Governor Baldacci said. "The budget also left us in a position to deal with the further erosion of State revenue for the current year. When we passed the budget, we knew that our work wasn't done. We will continue to meet the challenges before us and take responsible actions to ensure that State has a balanced budget."

According to preliminary revenue estimates for May from the State Controller, State revenue for May was under budget by $21.2 million. Analysis of the shortfall by Maine Revenue Services and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services attributes roughly half of the amount to timing issues that should resolve this month.

The Governor's proposal, which was presented to the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs today, would:

• Transfer $24 million in the Budget Stabilization Fund reserve account from fiscal year 2010 to 2009;

• Capture $1.6 million in unobligated funds from across State government; and

• Utilize $2 million of the approximately $2.7 million revenue balance in fiscal year 2011 created by the State budget, which was signed May 28.

Revenue projections for June are not available.

"While it is too early to project our revenue picture for June, the steps I am proposing today will give the State the flexibility to respond quickly to further, potential declines," Governor Baldacci said. "We will continue to keep a close eye on the economy, and we will continue to make adjustments as necessary."

The proposal balances the fiscal year 2009 budget without significant program changes or reductions in services.

"The national economy is facing unprecedented challenges, but we are seeing some positive signs," Governor Baldacci said. "If we continue to work together in a bipartisan and cooperative way to put the best interests of the State first, I know that Maine will weather these challenging times and be prepared for future prosperity."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Pleased with Domtar Reopening in Baileyville

June 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said he was pleased with the announcement from Domtar that the Woodland pulp mill in Baileyville will resume production the week of June 22, 2009, with plans to gradually call back all employees who had been laid off.

The Governor has maintained close contact with Domtar officials since the company announced the shutdown of the Baileyville facility in March. Governor Baldacci has worked closely with Tim Lowe, General Manager of Domtar, and other company officials.

"I am pleased that the hard-working employees of the Woodland pulp mill will soon be back to work," said Governor Baldacci. "I have maintained throughout these past few months the belief that with the continued cooperation of the company and with high quality, productive people at the mill, these jobs could be saved."

"We will continue to work with the company on improving its long-term strength and on the potential repurposing of the facility," Governor Baldacci said. "This is great news today. Hundreds of workers will be going back on the job."

The Governor noted the dedication of the Maine Congressional Delegation and Baileyville and State officials for their work to assist the company. He also thanked Domtar officials for exhibiting their good faith commitment to getting the mill back up and running.

Domtar noted that its decision to reopen is a result of the commitment from State and Federal officials as well as stabilization in market conditions and an increase in global demand for pulp. Roughly 300 workers will be recalled at the mill and between 35 and 100 workers at the Port of Eastport.

"This mill reopening shows that - while the current global recession continues to place severe challenges on us all - Maine people and businesses can yet prosper and find opportunities," said Governor Baldacci.

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Governor Introduces Bill to Resolve Work Dispute in Northern Maine

June 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today introduced emergency legislation to address issues that are keeping Maine workers from jobs in the North Maine Woods.

"Getting people back to work has to be our top priority," Governor Baldacci said. "While concerns about the wages and the concentration of land ownership in Northern Maine remain, the current law is actually preventing people from working. That's not acceptable."

Governor Baldacci traveled to Fort Kent on Saturday and discussed the issue with loggers and has been working with State Rep. John Martin and Senator Troy Jackson to resolve the issues.

The bill would repeal the law that requires large landowners to bargain with forest harvesters and haulers to set wage rates for their services. It also tightens requirements that companies that hire foreign bond workers must own the equipment used by those workers.

Under the legislation, the Department of Conservation would assist the Department of Labor in efforts to enforce the law, operators of equipment would be required to carry and produce proof of ownership and the penalty for violations of the law would triple.

The bill also lists a number of actions that the Maine Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor will take to ensure Maine workers are treated fairly for employment and that all rules pertaining to visas for foreign workers are strictly followed.

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Governor and Legislature Celebrate Health Care Accomplishments

June 10, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci was joined today by State legislators, health care providers, organizations and supporters of health reform to celebrate the significant progress that has been made this session to improve Maine's health care system.

Key initiatives that address cost, quality and access to health care have passed this session. Taken together, these bills will help advance the broad goals of the original Dirigo Health Reform to make affordable, quality health care available to all Mainers and to work to make Maine the healthiest state.

"This Legislature has shown its commitment to improving health care for all Maine people," said Governor Baldacci. "I know there's a lot more work to be done before this session ends, including a number of important health care bills, but I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding leadership of the Maine Legislature and the many health care organizations that have worked so hard to ensure that Maine people have access to high quality, affordable health care."

Governor's bills on public health, medical error reduction and health care insurance, including DirigoChoice, were among the many celebrated today. The Governor has also recently signed legislation to reduce infections in hospital settings, establish medical school scholarships, enhance telemedicine services and to improve health care transparency. Several additional important bills are still being deliberated.

"We want hard-working families and businesses to prosper and thrive, and that simply is not possible without having access to health care that is affordable and of high quality," said the Governor.

The Governor provided an outline of some key initiatives passed this session that address cost, quality and access to health care – the three pillars laid of the comprehensive Dirigo Health Reform law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2003.

Costs are being addressed by bills passed:

o promoting transparency (LD 724);

o expanding opportunities to reward patients who choose high-quality, high-value providers (LD 1397);

o making sure we have the equipment and new technology we need, but not more than we can afford (LD 1395); and

o supporting reforms for cost-effective care (LD 1444).

Quality is being addressed by:

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o establishing a coordinated collaborative public health system that will launch the universal wellness plan funded with existing funds and savings from efficiencies (LD 1363);

o promoting patient-centered primary care delivery (LD 353); and

o taking steps to reduce medical errors and the risk of infection in Maine's hospitals (LD 960, LD 1038 and LD 1435).

Access is being addressed by bills passed:

o supporting medical school scholarships (LD 353);

o retaining eligibility levels for MaineCare (LD 353);

o expanding telemedicine services (LD 1073);

o expanding federal COBRA subsidies for temporarily laid off workers in small firms (LD 1180); and

o stabilizing funding for DirigoChoice so the program can be redesigned to provide more affordable options in the marketplace and take advantage of federal funds (LD 1264).

"Maine has been recognized as a national leader in providing health care coverage for our people," said the Governor. "We have achieved a lot this year; and we know that there is much more to do. I am hopeful that we will continue to take the opportunity to work together, because when we do, Maine people benefit."

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Governor Highlights Awardees of Community Development Block Grants

June 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today highlighted five of the 56 communities who have benefited from Community Development Block Grants over the past year. The Governor participated in a press conference to acknowledge the work done around Maine through the CDBG program.

"CDBG funds, allocated to the State of Maine from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, contributed more than $12 million during Fiscal Year 2009," Governor Baldacci said. "This funding, along with other Federal, State and local funds have leveraged an additional $23 million for projects to make communities a better place for residents to live and work in Maine."

The Governor mentioned projects in Richmond, Old Orchard Beach, Thomaston, Milo and Greenbush as successful examples of expansions, infrastructure improvements and rehabilitations, funded in part through the CDBG program. Representatives from Fort Fairfield, Waterville and the Maine Crafts Association also spoke on the benefits of the program.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill Addressing Homelessness

June 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1127, An Act To Define Services for Maine Runaway and Homeless Youth.

The law establishes a comprehensive program for homeless youth and runaways. The Department of Health and Human Services will enter into performance-based contracts with agencies and organizations to provide street and community outreach, drop-in programs, emergency shelter and transitioning living services. Monitoring will be in place to ensure quality and track rates of homelessness.

"This is a very important and efficient piece of legislation," Governor Baldacci said. "It provides the oversight while continuing to provide the resources. The law enables us to better address homelessness among our youth."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Sen. Justin Alfond (D-Cumberland), advocates and co-sponsors of the legislation.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Telemedicine Insurance Legislation

June 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1073, An Act To Provide for Insurance Coverage of Telemedicine Services.

The law requires health insurance providers to cover services provided through interactive audio, video or other electronic media, just as it would cover services provided through in-person consultation.

"Telemedicine offers opportunities to increase the accessibility of health care, ensure that appropriate medical information is available, reduces medical errors and reduces health care costs," Governor Baldacci said. "This bill makes sense and I am pleased to sign it."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Anne Perry (D-Calais).

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Opens Military Networking Conference

June 11, 2009

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today opened a conference to educate people about the Maine Military and Community Network. The conference, called "From the War Zone to the Home Front: Engaging Communities to Support Service Members and their Families" is being held to establish a community network of agencies and providers to assist military members.

"Your being here today says that you want to make a commitment to building this network and having this support staff," Governor Baldacci told the conference attendees. "The support you are showing and are committing to is vitally important to our troops and their families."

The Maine Military and Community Network consists of regional taskforces and a monthly steering group, as well as a statewide network of professionals and volunteers who help veterans and their families. The statewide network includes members of the Maine National Guard and Family Programs, Chaplains, other Military groups, Veterans Affairs, Maine Bureau of Veterans Services and the Department of Health and Human Services. The group helps returning troops and their families make smoother transitions from the war zone back to the home front.

The daylong conference, held at Colby College, included panel discussions, exhibits and breakout sessions centered on the impact deployment can have on soldiers, their families and communities, and support that can be offered.

"We can never do enough to show our support for our troops," the Governor said, "but we must continue to ensure that they have every resource available to them."

People interested in joining the Maine Military and Community Network should send an e-mail to mainevetsupport@gmail.com. Those e-mailing will be signed up for the group's listserv, which will provide monthly e-mails of the calendar of events and notifications of relevant news and information.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs School Cooperation Legislation

June 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1049, An Act To Encourage Cooperation Among School Administrative Units.

The law encourages collaboration and cooperatives among school units to accomplish additional savings and efficiencies beyond reorganization. Participation in the cooperatives and services carried out by the cooperatives is voluntary. Some of the educational functions and support services to be provided by the cooperatives include alternative education programs, gifted and talented education programs, postsecondary education options, and food service planning and purchasing.

"This builds upon what we have achieved so far – offering additional ways to save across an even greater area," Governor Baldacci said. "In an era when we are faced with significant financial challenges and the reality that we cannot continue to sustain the education system the way it is, we need to use every tool to streamline and find efficiencies so that we can put the largest share of our funds possible straight into the classroom."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Patricia Sutherland (D-Chapman), supporters and co-sponsors of the legislation.

The bill was passed as emergency legislation, and therefore went into effect with the Governor's signature.

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Governor Signs Historic Energy Legislation

June 12, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law LD 1485, An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future. The emergency measure sets aggressive goals to end Maine's dangerous dependency on foreign fuels.

"Maine is a leader in addressing clean, renewable energy and pursuing green jobs," said Governor Baldacci. "This law is a significant and bold next step. It sets the course for ambitious and achievable measures to reduce the stranglehold of fossil fuels on our pocketbooks and environment."

The Governor has pursued growth of renewable energy, recognizing the great potential for energy self-sufficiency and lower energy prices for Maine people and businesses.

The law establishes the Efficiency Maine Trust and Board, bringing together under one roof Maine's energy rebate, efficiency and conservation programs. The Board will design, coordinate and integrate energy efficiency, weatherization and alternative energy programs in the State for all energy consumers in Maine. Individuals, families and businesses will have a one-stop shop that they can go to for help with all of their energy efficiency needs.

In addition, the law sets goals to:

o Weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030;

o Reduce peak electric energy consumption by 100 Megawatts by 2020;

o Reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030;

o Build private sector jobs in clean energy businesses, providing a much needed boost to our economy and putting our people to work in good jobs;

o Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the quality of our environment and the health of our people; and

o Achieve significant reductions in electricity and natural gas by 2020.

A fund is also established to build and rehabilitate affordable housing, making them more energy efficient, affordable and available.

The law also sets up a reasonable process for managing opportunities to take advantage of Maine's location to develop new renewable energy resources.

"With this law, Maine will send fewer energy dollars out of the State; we'll reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and we'll create thousands of jobs for Maine workers," said Governor Baldacci.

The law is a compilation of provisions introduced in separate legislation by the Governor (and sponsored by Representative John Martin), Senate President Libby Mitchell, House Speaker Hannah Pingree, and House Majority Whip Seth Berry. The Governor also noted in the signing ceremony the significant contributions of the Chairs and Leads of the Special Select Committee on Maine's Energy Future and the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy.

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Governor Baldacci Applauds Passage of Tax Reform Compromise

June 11, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today applauded the passage of LD 1495, An Act to Implement Tax Relief and Tax Reform.

"From the beginning, I have said that I support the goal of tax reform and of lowering the top income tax rate," Governor Baldacci said. "The changes enacted today will lower the income tax, make the tax code more progressive and stable, and help grow our economy."

The compromise makes changes in LD 1088, An Act to Modernize the Tax Laws and Provide Over $50,000,000 to Residents of the State in Tax Relief, which was enacted by the Legislature on June 5.

The bill, which was negotiated by the Governor, Democratic Leaders in the House and Senate, and the leaders of the Taxation Committee, will:

Make a portion of the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable for lower and middle income families;

Eliminate expansion of the sales tax on some recreation activities;

Eliminate the increase in the Real Estate Transfer Tax;

Provide increased funding for tourism marketing; and

Maintain the income tax reduction from 8.5 percent to 6.5 percent for income up to $250,000. A 0.35 percent surcharge will be added to incomes above $250,000 (2 percent of filers), raising their top rate to 6.85 percent.

The tax reform plan, including the proposed changes, remains revenue neutral.

"These changes maintain the core principals that the Taxation Committee and members of the Legislature worked hard to adopt," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine's tax code will be more stable, more of the tax burden will be exported and the top tax rate will be significantly reduced."

The Governor's primary concerns with LD 1088 focused on the increase in the Real Estate Transfer Tax, increased taxes on other services, and the cumulative effect of multiple sales tax increases on particular industries.

By making the EITC partially refundable, lower and middle income families will see an increase in disposable income, which could be used to pay for essential items or services. Maine is one of only three states with an EITC that is not refundable.

"The compromise is more progressive, more families see a direct benefit and we provide greater support for our tourism industry without negatively affecting the fragile real estate market," Governor Baldacci said.

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By excluding certain recreation activities from expanded taxation, the changes reduce the cumulative impact of the tax package on individuals and the tourism industry while also promoting many outdoor activities.

"Maine has a great brand and an unrivaled quality of place," Governor Baldacci said. "We want to do all we can to encourage people to get outside and take advantage of what our State has to offer."

The Governor thanked Senate President Libby Mitchell, Speaker Hannah Pingree, members of Legislative leadership and particularly Majority Leader John Piotti, Sen. Joe Perry and Rep. Thomas Watson, who worked for more than two years to develop LD 1088.

"We are significantly improving our tax system," Governor Baldacci said. "I know that countless hours have been spent on this plan, and that it is always difficult to make changes. I sincerely appreciate the good-faith effort to find a compromise and enact meaningful tax reform. This is an important accomplishment for Maine that will strengthen our economy and reduce the overall tax burden on our people."

The Governor is expected to sign the bill on Friday.

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Maine Lowers Income Taxes

June 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1495, An Act to Implement Tax Relief and Tax Reform. The Governor hailed the bill, which lowers the top income tax rate and reduces the tax burden on Maine residents by almost $55 million.

"This bill takes an important step in lowering the tax burden on Maine's families and businesses," Governor Baldacci said. "Our tax code will be more progressive and stable. These reforms will help grow our economy."

The Governor applauded the work of the Democratic Legislative Leadership and Chairs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation for working with his Administration on the bill.

The bill changes current tax structure in a number of ways:

• Lowers the top income tax rate from 8.5 percent to 6.5 percent for income up to $250,000;

• Lowers the top income tax rate for incomes above $250,000 from 8.5 percent to 6.85 percent;

• Broadens the sale tax;

• Makes a portion of the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable for lower and middle income families;

• Increases funding for tourism marketing; and

• The tax reform plan is revenue-neutral.

By making the Earned Income Tax Credit partially refundable, lower and middle income families will see an increase in disposable income.

Investing more in tourism will generate jobs and help draw tourists to Maine.

"Families and businesses will see a direct benefit from this tax package," Governor Baldacci said. "Small businesses make up much of Maine's economy and pay taxes through the individual income tax. Lowering the top rate leaves them with more money to invest."

"This tax relief and reform gives Maine a tax structure for the 21st Century," Governor Baldacci said.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill on Volunteer Lobbyists

June 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1210, An Act Regarding Volunteer Lobbyists.

The law states that individuals who come to the State House to lobby are not considered lobbyists by definition if they only receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses for their lobbying activities. By not being defined as lobbyists, the volunteers are not required to register as such and are therefore exempt from the lobbyist registration fee.

"We want to encourage accessibility so that individuals can have access to the Legislature and to Executive officials," Governor Baldacci said. "It shouldn't be true that these halls are only filled with professional lobbyists and the public should know that they are welcome in the halls of their Capitol and to approach their representatives, Governor or administrative officials just as any lobbyist can and does."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Michael Carey (D-Lewiston), Attorney General Janet Mills and advocates for the legislation.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Carbon Monoxide Detector Legislation

June 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 550, An Act To Protect Maine Residents from Home Fires and Carbon Monoxide.

The legislation makes a number of updates to the existing law governing the placement and testing of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It also clarifies that both types of detectors must be powered by battery and electricity.

"According to the Maine Center for Disease Control, between 150 and 200 people are hospitalized each year in Maine for carbon monoxide poisoning," Governor Baldacci said. "And one to five deaths result from carbon monoxide poisoning. This is a piece of legislation that is certain to improve the safety of Maine homes and I am pleased to sign it."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Sen. Bill Diamond (D-Cumberland), co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation. Also at the ceremony were two families who have lost family members because of carbon monoxide poisoning. Governor Baldacci praised them for telling their stories to advocate for the legislation.

"The families that are here have shared their heartfelt stories about the need for these detectors," the Governor said. "To take something sad and tragic and make sure that so many other families don't go through that same experience is a testament to you and your family. Thank you very much for being here."

The legislation will take effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

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Governor Welcomes New Technology Company to Augusta

June 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed news that Bolduc Technology Group, a worldwide leader of advanced adaptive mobility controls, has solidified their expansion and relocation plans to Augusta, Maine. The company announced that it is relocating from Louisiana to Maine, with 18 new high technology jobs to start.

The Governor praised the Commissioner and staff of Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), as well as officials from the City of Augusta, for their commitment to working with the Bolduc Technology Group.

"Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development and the City of Augusta's commitment and assistance, along with the Pine Tree Zone incentives, were critical in the Bolduc Technology Group's decision to relocate to Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "During these difficult economic times, it's vital that we continue to aggressively pursue new companies to Maine and help others expand. This high-tech manufacturing company's choice to move here is testimony to the work we've done to improve Maine's business climate."

Bolduc Technology Group consists of two divisions, Electronic Mobility Controls (EMC) and AEVIT Services Company (ASC). AEVIT is an acronym for Advanced Electronic Vehicle Interface Technology. Due to the large successes of their AEVIT technology the company sought expansion.

AEVIT Services Company products are intended for the purposes of autonomously and remotely piloting vehicles used for U.S. defense, Homeland Security, and for perimeter security applications such as airfields, inland waterways and harbors. AEVIT Services Company (ASC) manufactures and designs remotely piloted, and/or autonomous vehicles utilizing AEVIT 2.0 technology.

Founded in 1992, EMC manufactures, sells, and services high-tech adaptive driving controls to persons with disabilities. EMC has over 100 North American dealers and operates throughout Europe.

The Maine DECD Office of Business Development assisted the company in the completion of their Pine Tree Zone application in order to gain access to the state incentives.

"Under the Pine Tree Development Zone initiative, this company, which believes in investing in the community around it, will create new jobs and new investment in the city of Augusta and contribute to economic recovery for the State of Maine," said Commissioner John Richardson of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Pine Tree Zone program is a performance-based tax incentive initiative introduced by Governor Baldacci to stimulate growth in targeted business sectors that is offered through Maine DECD to support Maine businesses, create quality jobs for Maine people, strengthen our economy and keep Maine competitive in the global economy.

The City of Augusta played a prominent role in this project by reacting to a company inquiry quickly and working directly with the contractors, the company and the state to streamline the processes and permitting that made the move attractive for Bolduc Technology Group.

For more information on Bolduc Technology Group please visit the company website at: http://www.emc-digi.com/explore.cfm/aboutusdetails/

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Governor Baldacci: Legislature Passes Responsible Investment Plan

June 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement regarding the passage by the Legislature of a $150 million investment package.

"The Legislature has passed a responsible investment plan that will fund important improvements to our roads and bridges, promote innovation and provide critical support for higher education," Governor Baldacci said.

"I am particularly pleased that the Legislature approved funding to develop an offshore wind energy demonstration site and to support the redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station."

"Maine's economy requires State government to be prudent with its resources, and along with the budget passed earlier this year, the Legislature has demonstrated its willingness to make difficult decisions. At the same time, we must invest in our people and our economy. The bonds approved today will create jobs, and help Maine prepare for economic recovery."

Governor Baldacci is expected to sign the bond legislation early next week.

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Governor Baldacci Salutes Members of 124th Legislature

June 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci made the following remarks at the close of the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature.

"The time has come to close the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

"The work you have accomplished on behalf of the people of Maine is truly impressive.

"When this session began, you faced a daunting list of challenges.

"But at each turn, the members of the 124th Legislature rose to the occasion and answered the challenge.

"This Legislature put partisanship and ideology aside to tackle the worst economic recession in more than 70 years.

"We passed a budget that reduced State spending, while protecting the core values of our State and our people.

"We passed significant energy legislation that will set Maine on the path to greater energy independence and security.

"We affirmed the protections guaranteed in our Constitution that everyone in our State, regardless of sexual orientation, be treated equally under the law.

"We worked cooperatively to quickly implement the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which has already put people to work in Maine.

"We expanded training for workers and for the unemployed.

"This Legislature has dealt with tough issues and, almost all of the time, did it with a spirit of good humor, compassion and patience.

"We lowered the income tax and transformed our tax code for the 21st Century, making it more stable and more progressive.

"We improved the quality, access and affordability of health care.

"And we have made important investments in our people and in our economy.

"At times, we continued our work even when we couldn't reach bipartisan accord.

"But even then, when differences surfaced, this session has been marked by goodwill and openness.

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"The people of Maine don't expect us to always agree, but they do expect us to work together and get things done. You have done that.

"As the session ends, patience may be frayed and fatigue has taken its toll, but in the days and weeks to come, you will look back on the last six months with a sense of pride and accomplishment because you have made the State of Maine stronger.

"On behalf of the people of this Great State, thank you for your dedication and your service."

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Governor Applauds TD Banknorth / TD Bank Auburn Expansion Plans

June 15, 2009

AUBURN – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined TD Banknorth / TD Bank officials as plans were announced for the bank to open a new facility to expand its call center operations in Auburn in 2010. TD Banknorth / TD Bank plans to hire 200 new employees for the call center.

Governor Baldacci thanked TD Bank President and CEO Bharat Masrani for honoring the commitment he has made to the citizens of Maine.

"Bharat Masrani and I had breakfast together a few years ago where he talked about the reorganizations and acquisitions taking place within the company," Governor Baldacci said. "He assured me that in the end it would work out very well for Maine. I am here to thank him not only for making that commitment, but honoring that commitment to the State of Maine."

The new call center will be located in a vacant space within the Auburn Mall. The facility will encompass 60,000 square-feet and be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Efficient Design) certified, with environmentally friendly features including lighting and climate controls, water-efficient irrigation and use of recycled wood. TD has a 10-year lease on the property and will begin $16 million in renovations later this year.

"TD Bank could expand anywhere, and we are pleased it selected Maine," the Governor said. "There are many reasons our State made it to the top of the list. We have a tremendous workforce. And our Pine Tree Zone program incentives have made a real difference to this company."

At the end of 2008, there were a total of 213 Pine Tree Zone certified businesses in Maine, responsible for more than 6,500 anticipated jobs. Those jobs have resulted in $203 million in anticipated payroll and $685 million in anticipated investment.

TD Banknorth / TD Bank currently employs more than 2,600 people in Maine, including about 1,000 in the Lewiston/Auburn area.

Governor Baldacci and Mr. Masrani were joined at the announcement today by Senator Susan Collins, Congressman Michael Michaud, Auburn Mayor John Jenkins, TD Banknorth Maine President Larry Wold and local officials.

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Governor's Statement on Federal Rule on Atlantic Salmon

June 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued the following statement on the decision of the Federal government to expand the Endangered Species Act in Maine for Atlantic Salmon. The rule includes the Androscoggin, Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers to the existing Endangered Species Act.

"I am deeply disappointed and concerned that the State's comments to the draft rule were not incorporated in the final decision of the Federal government. This Federal action ignores Maine's strong track record in species management and our need for a flexible approach which will enable us to use all our tools to work with stakeholders to manage Atlantic salmon."

"The extreme approach chosen by the Federal government hamstrings the State's ability to use creative conservation efforts that have been successful in the past. Just last month we hailed the success of the State, working in concert with Federal and private stakeholders, to delist the Bald Eagle as an endangered species. We know cooperative approaches are best to yield results that will restore Atlantic salmon populations while preserving Maine's economy."

"I intend to work with Maine's Congressional Delegation and others to explore options available to the State, including legal actions."

Last week, following a conversation on this issue, the Governor sent a letter to U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar detailing the specific concerns of the State of Maine with the potential expanded Endangered Species Act listing. The text of the letter follows.

June 8, 2009

Secretary Ken Salazar

U.S. Department of Interior

1849 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss Atlantic salmon and the challenges that an expanded ESA listing brings to Maine. It is my belief that the best patch forward is through cooperation and collaboration to protect this majestic species. To pursue strong and effective recovery of this species, Maine must have the flexibility to incorporate state-based strategies that minimize negative impacts on the State of Maine while ensuring that Atlantic salmon prosper.

To recap and add to some of the issues we discussed briefly:

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The proposed rule states that the Distinct Population Segment (DPS) consists of both wild and conservation hatchery Atlantic salmon. However, the Services' listing decision is counter to this existing policy; hatchery fish in the wild or in the federal hatcheries do not count towards recovery goals. This inconsistency must be addressed as these fish are one in the same and all fish should count towards recovery.

An expanded DPS will overwhelm the Federal Services who are responsible for ESA permitting. The existing DPS is in a very rural area without the complex issues found in the large watersheds that have extensive urban and industrial influence. Adding Maine's largest rivers in more developed watersheds to the DPS will bring with it significant transportation infrastructure, industrial and municipal wastewater, large-scale hydro, agriculture, and forestry challenges that have not been problems in the current DPS. Neither state nor federal permitting staff, at current levels, can handle the enormous workload this will bring. The result is to put into jeopardy the recovery of the species and put at risk Maine's fragile economic health.

The designation of critical habitat is concerning as it also includes issues that have not been dealt with in the current DPS (industrial water use, large hydro projects, municipal waste water for example, and critical habitat). As a result, there is considerable uncertainty regarding what may adversely modify a primary habitat element. This uncertainty translates into concerns about the potential for costly delays in permitting and unpredictable restrictions. As is the case with item 2, the federal and state agencies do not have the staff in place to write biological opinions that will be needed if adverse impacts are identified during the permitting of projects. Again, added delays impede recovery of the species and negatively impact the economy.

The decision to include the Androscoggin River in the GOM DPS should be delayed due to current lack of information. The Services must use an approach in defining the northern and southern limits of the GOM DPS consistent with the Services' method during the original designation of the DPS in 2000 when the Androscoggin, Kennebec and Penobscot were not included due to lack of scientific information.

The joint jurisdiction of Atlantic salmon continues to be a concern as the dual-agency system results in delay that jeopardizes the species. We recommend that only one Agency have sole jurisdiction.

I was very interested in your examples of cooperative conservation. The Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the Gray Wolf Recovery are examples where the Federal agencies are equal partners with the State. Our laws, regulations, and BMPs currently in place are very protective of Atlantic salmon, which is one of my major reasons for supporting Threatened Status for Atlantic salmon. It is this type of cooperative approach between State and Federal agencies that seems to be the reasons for the success in the Western United States you identified. It is my hope that in the coming months we will forge a similar approach between Maine and the Federal agencies.

The State of Maine has a long-standing and profound environmental ethic. It is my goal and that of my Administration to improve the ecosystem upon which the Atlantic salmon depend and improve the biotic and abiotic environment for all species. I look forward to continuing our discussions and finding a positive path forward for Atlantic salmon and a collaborative and equal partnership.

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Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor, State of Maine

Cc: Secretary Locke, Department of Commerce

Senator Olympia Snowe

Senator Susan Collins

Congressman Mike Michaud

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Ban Smoking at Outdoor Dining Areas

June 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 820, An Act To Limit Smoking in Outdoor Dining Areas.

The law prohibits smoking in outdoor eating areas such as a patio or a deck that is under the control of an eating establishment.

"It has been my goal to make Maine the healthiest State in the nation," Governor Baldacci said. "To achieve that goal, we must continue making headway in reducing tobacco use."

The Governor pointed out that Maine has received national recognition for reducing the rate of smoking among its teenagers and for using Tobacco Settlement Funds for prevention efforts.

The Governor was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Joan Cohen (D-Portland) and supporters of the legislation.

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Governor Baldacci Signs Resolve to Review Regulatory Systems

June 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1413, Resolve, To Implement Select Recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Future Maine Prosperity.

The resolve calls for a Regulatory Fairness Board to review Maine's current regulatory systems. It also asks for public input to be a part of the review.

"There have been many reports over the years that indicate an important way we can continue to make Maine a welcoming place for new and expanding businesses," Governor Baldacci said. "The report called for in this resolve would include ways we can improve the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of State regulations."

The resolve calls for the Regulatory Fairness Board to issue a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development by February 15, 2010.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Joan Cohen (D-Portland) and supporters of the legislation.

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Governor Baldacci Opens 2009 EnergyOcean Conference

June 16, 2009

ROCKPORT - Governor John E. Baldacci today opened the 2009 EnergyOcean Conference by talking about Maine's commitment to renewable sources of energy.

"Maine is New England's leader in developing its vast land-based wind resource," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has more than 300 megawatts currently operating or under construction, and another 450 in various stages of development. Our offshore wind resource is even larger, estimated at more than 100 gigawatts. That's enough to power all of New England with power to spare."

The three-day conference has attracted more than 400 technologists, financiers and policy makers from around the world to share and discuss opportunities for the renewable market of ocean-based energy. In addition to the Governor's address, the agenda for the first day includes keynote speakers from the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, a U.S. Government Panel Session and a panel session on Minerals Management Service's Technology Assessment and Research Program.

Governor Baldacci told conference-goers that Maine's energy needs do not stop with lights and appliances. He said that 90 percent of Maine's families' energy budget goes to heat their home and operate their motor vehicle, 80 percent of homes and many businesses heat with oil, and 100 percent of Maine's cars and trucks run on oil.

"Our State alone exports many billions of dollars each year," the Governor said. "That money goes out of state and overseas to pay for heat and motor fuel. Maine people want to stop spending their energy dollars overseas and instead keep those dollars here."

The Governor said the State's goal is to cut the Maine family's overall energy costs by two-thirds, in part through the use of ocean energy.

"Using the wind, the waves and the tides for heat and transport it promising and will help us achieve those goals," the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci last week signed into law a bill put forward by the Ocean Energy Task Force to establish a 60-day expedited permitting process for the demonstration and testing of ocean energy technologies in appropriate sites in State waters in the Gulf of Maine.

"The ocean energy legislation received unanimous and bipartisan support from the Maine Legislature," Governor Baldacci said. "In Maine, we understand that the challenges we face are large, and that we need to act now, act quickly, and act as one."

Governor Baldacci also took the opportunity at the conference to announce a trade mission to Spain and Germany this fall that will be focused on renewable energy. He said the trade mission will enable Maine

companies to connect with progressive companies abroad and hopefully attract future energy investment in the State.

EnergyOcean 2009 continues Wednesday with panel discussions, technical sessions and presentations before wrapping up Thursday afternoon.

For more details, visit www.maineoceanenergy.com or www.energyocean.com/2009/.

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Maine Receives $6.5 Million in Homeland Security Funds

June 16, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that the State of Maine will receive $6,524,500 in State Homeland Security Grant Program funds. The funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) support regional emergency planning, training and exercise programs, as well as maintenance costs for regional response teams and equipment. A portion of these funds is typically made available to communities under a competitive grant program.

"Maine has a great track record of spending homeland security funds wisely," Governor John Baldacci said. "We have set priorities based on our risk, including our long coastline and international border. We have established robust regional response capability, trained hundreds of first responders to national standards and are in the process of modernizing and hardening our public safety communications systems. Maine has been a leader in the effective use of these funds, and we're pleased that the federal support will continue."

This year's allocation to Maine is a six percent increase from last year's grant. The increase is in part due to a restructuring of the formula in state grants.

The Citizen Corps program, which supports volunteer community response teams, will receive $146,931, equivalent to last year. The Metropolitan Medical Response System, in which Maine participates in a joint program with New Hampshire and Vermont, also received continuing funding.

FEMA previously announced continuing funding for a program which reimburses law enforcement agencies for their support to the U.S. Border Patrol, and a program for detailed security planning around high-risk sites. Maine also receives an annual FEMA Emergency Management grant which provides matching funds to state, county and local emergency management agencies.

The Homeland Security Grant Program is administered by the Maine Emergency Management Agency. Grants are expected to be formally awarded to the State in the next 60 days. The State then has 45 days to allocate the funds.

More detail on these grant programs can be found at http://www.fema.gov/grants

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Combat Obesity

June 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Surrounded by Legislators and public health advocates, Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed three bills designed to combat the problem of obesity in Maine.

"This is a critical public health issue, especially when it comes to our children's health," said the Governor. "Maine has the highest rate of obesity in New England. It's estimated that 30 percent of our youth are overweight or obese."

"We know that obesity and overweight are key contributors to serious medical conditions, generating high costs to our health care system," said the Governor. "These bills will help us to continue to address reduce obesity, and thus the preventable diseases associated with it."

The Governor ceremonially signed the following health care bills:

LD 1259, An Act to Increase Access to Nutrition Information, sponsored by House Speaker Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven). The bill requires chain restaurants to provide caloric content of menu items to customers. The provisions go into effect on Feb. 1, 2011.

LD 1407, An Act to Assess the Physical Education Capacity of Elementary Schools in Maine and To Establish the Obesity and Chronic Disease Fund within the Department of Education, sponsored by House Majority Whip, Representative Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham). The bill moves Maine further in the direction of increasing physical education and physical activity in schools.

LD 319, An Act To Track the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity in Maine, sponsored by Representative Rankin (D-Hiram). The legislation calls for the voluntary collection by schools of body mass index. Accurate, confidential screening will provide data to measure the problem of obesity and the level of success of efforts to combat obesity.

"We've been working on the underlying issues impacting obesity for many years," said Governor Baldacci. "Through Dirigo Health Reform we have been working to increase preventive care, encourage best practices and engage all stakeholders in the public health system. The State Health Plan is our roadmap for making Maine the healthiest state in the nation. In addition, this year we passed the Universal Wellness initiative, which provides community-based support and services to help people be healthy."

For more information on these or other bills from this session, visit http://janus.state.me.us/legis/

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Governor Applauds Launch of Maine Woods Discovery

June 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined a number of Maine inland tourism leaders, Maine Office of Tourism Director Patricia Eltman and public officials to celebrate the launch of Maine Woods Discovery, a collaborative tourism initiative. Maine Woods Discovery offers vacation packages that include outdoor, recreational, cultural and other Maine Woods destination highlights.

"In these challenging times, we must rely on creative partnerships to stretch limited resources and build regional approaches," said the Governor. "That's exactly what this group has achieved. These partners have combined their considerable strengths to collaborate on tour packages that will benefit the entire region."

Representatives from many Maine Woods Discovery partners were at the State House event for the launch, including: Sunday River; Saddleback; Sugarloaf; Maine Huts and Trails; Mountain Counties Heritage; Northern Outdoors; Appalachian Mountain Club; New England Outdoor Center; and Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

"This effort highlights the great natural and cultural assets of inland Maine and will help to create jobs and grow Maine's economy," said the Governor.

For more information on Maine Woods Discovery, visit http://www.mainewoodsdiscovery.com/

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Governor Baldacci's Statement on Fraser Papers

June 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today after learning that Fraser Papers Inc. has initiated court-supervised restructuring.

"I talked with the CEO of Fraser Papers, Peter Gordon, last night, and he explained that the filing will allow the company the opportunity to reorganize and chart a path toward renewed success," Governor Baldacci said. "Mr. Gordon assured me that the filing would not immediately impact the company's operations in Madawaska or the employees there."

According to Fraser Papers, the filing is the result of weak demand and low prices for pulp and lumber, scheduled debt payments and other obligations.

"My administration will continue to work with Fraser Papers, and do everything possible to protect jobs in Maine," Governor Baldacci said.

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MaineHousing's "Gift of Green" Offers Cash Incentives of Up to $5,500 to Buy a Home

June 18, 2009

Combined with federal tax credits, total incentives for first time buyers can be as high as $15,000

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today some good news for first-time homebuyers – and for Maine's housing market. MaineHousing is starting a new "Gift of Green" homeownership initiative that provides eligible First Home program borrowers with up to $5,500 in financial incentives to purchase a home.

"When MaineHousing's financial assistance is combined with existing federal incentives to buy a home and make it more energy efficient, the total financial incentives can be as much as $15,000," Baldacci said. "This combination of state and federal assistance should encourage many more Maine families to take that step to become homeowners. The Gift of Green invests in Maine people and in Maine's housing market."

MaineHousing launched the Gift of Green, part of its First Home program, with support from the Maine Association of Realtors, the Maine Association of Community Banks and the Maine Credit Union League. MaineHousing's First Home program offers low fixed-rate mortgages to eligible first-time homebuyers.

Gift of Green loans will be made on a first-come, first-served basis while funds last. MaineHousing expects to make about 500 mortgages using Gift of Green incentives.

The Gift of Green offers:

• A grant of up to $5,000, not to exceed 4 percent of the loan amount, to help with the cash required for the down payment and other closing expenses.

• A coupon of up to $500 for a pre-weatherization and post weatherization home energy audit.

MaineHousing designed the program to help homebuyers take advantage of the federal tax credits for first-time homebuyers and for home energy improvements.

"Our Gift of Green provides the initial cash needed to make buying a home possible," said Dale McCormick, Director of MaineHousing. "Homebuyers benefit from the federal tax credit for first time homebuyers – which is worth up to $8,000 — only if they have the resources to buy a home."

"And if they make eligible home energy efficiency improvements before the end of 2010, they may leverage an additional energy efficiency federal tax credit of up to $1,500. Weatherization is the gift that keeps on giving through lower heating bills year after year," McCormick said.

Borrowers using MaineHousing's "Purchase Plus Improvement" option may include the cost of eligible home energy improvements in the First Home mortgage.

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"It is an amazing opportunity for buyers," said Cindy Butts of the Maine Association of Realtors. "Since Gift of Green funding is limited, I'd encourage people interested in becoming homeowners to act now and contact their local Realtor."

To qualify for the Gift of Green, the homebuyer needs to pay at least 1 percent of the loan amount from personal resources.

The new Gift of Green is offered through 35 lenders who participate in MaineHousing's First Home program. To be eligible, borrowers must be first-time homebuyers (have not owned a home in the past three years). Most homebuyers are income eligible and most homes are within the price limits of the program requirements. Income and home price limits are listed at www.mainehousing.org, along with participating lenders.

"This initiative helps make homeownership more affordable for first-time homebuyers. Maine credit unions are pleased to be a partner with MaineHousing to make this happen. In these challenging economic times, these opportunities are even more critical. Maine's credit unions have a long history of helping people, so helping make the dream of owning a home a reality for more Maine people is consistent with that commitment," stated John Murphy, President of the Maine Credit Union League.

MaineHousing's First Home mortgages come with payment protection for unemployment. If an eligible borrower becomes unemployed, MaineHousing will cover up to four mortgage payments, including taxes and homeowners insurance.

"Buying a home is the most important investment many people ever make," said Chris Pinkham, President of the Maine Association of Community Banks. "We are here to make homeownership a success for Maine people, and to finance home energy efficiency improvements that can make their home more affordable over time."

Gift of Green participants must take an approved homebuyer education class prior to loan closing. The classes educate homebuyers about the home buying process and different types of mortgage products. Informed buyers have a better chance for successful homeownership.

McCormick noted that MaineHousing is not using state or federal tax money to provide the Gift of Green incentive. MaineHousing sells mortgage revenue bonds to private investors to fund its First Home mortgages, and funds generated within the bond resolution can only be used to help make mortgages affordable to first time homebuyers.

For more information on the Gift of Green and for a list of Maine lenders offering MaineHousing's First Home mortgages, go to www.mainehousing.org/giftofgreen

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Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Delay Penalties for School Districts

June 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 285, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Consolidation of School Administrative Units to Delay All Penalties for One Year.

"Our intention has never been to punish school districts," Governor Baldacci said. "What we want is a more efficient and affordable system that puts available resources to work for students instead of paying for unnecessary administration."

"After careful consideration, I have decided to sign this legislation, which will delay penalties for one year for school districts that have not reorganized. This delay will give those districts working in good faith toward restructuring time to complete their work."

"We cannot continue with the school administrative organizations of the past. Student enrollment in Maine is falling while the number of administrators has been growing. It's unsustainable. We must continue to move forward along the path to reform."

"About 88 percent of the students in the State are in districts that are complying with the reorganization law, but we still have work to do."

"We will continue to support those districts that have not complied with the law and help them transition into more sustainable administrative structures. To that end, I have directed Education Commissioner Sue Gendron to continue efforts to facilitate administrative re-organization among the minority of districts that have not complied and to consider ways to improve the current law," Governor Baldacci said. "We all share a desire to do what is best for our children."

The Governor signed the following executive order along with LD 285:

30 FY 08/09

June 19, 2009

An Order to Facilitate School Administrative Unit Reorganization

WHEREAS, effective and efficient delivery of education services in the State is paramount to the future of the State; and

WHEREAS, I proposed and the Legislature approved a law in 2007 directing school administrative units to reorganize their structures in order to reduce the administrative cost burden on local and state taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the majority of school administrative units undertook the difficult work of finding partners to work with, and many obtained voter approval to reorganize their school units; and

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WHEREAS, the work to reorganize continues in some districts; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature enacted and I signed legislation to delay the funding penalties for those units for one year; and

WHEREAS, that delay will allow districts working in good faith to further pursue administrative reform; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of the Department of Education has directed the department's resources toward furthering reorganization efforts; and

WHEREAS, school units that have not complied with the reorganization law are being given additional time, for the sole purpose of enabling them to come into compliance;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine do hereby order the following:

That the Commissioner of the Department of Education continue efforts to facilitate school administrative reorganization among the school administrative units, which represent about 12 percent of the State's students, that have not come into compliance with PL 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX by July 1, 2009. The Commissioner is directed to confer with representatives of each of the school administrative units that are not in compliance with the reorganization law, to determine the reasons for delay; and to determine whether current law allows sufficient flexibility for units to come into compliance. The Commissioner is directed to report to me no later than January 1, 2010 with any recommendations for changes needed to assist all school administrative units with the reorganization law, and to further assist all units.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is June 19, 2009

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Governor Participates in White House Service Initiative

June 22, 2009

OAKLAND - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined campers at Camp Tracy in Oakland to help kick off the creation of an organic vegetable garden. The volunteer service project called "Maine's Future…Organic Kids" was organized by the Governor in response to President and Mrs. Obama's invitation to Governors and communities to come together for a nationwide service initiative. Food from the garden will be donated to area residents in need.

"Mainers have always been good neighbors, but now more than ever we need to pitch in and help one another," Governor Baldacci said. "Getting involved on the local level is critical to healthy and vibrant Maine communities."

Campers at Camp Tracy will continue to tend to the vegetable garden on the Governor's behalf throughout the summer. Food that is grown in the garden will be donated to the Kids Kitchen at the Alfond Center and to a Waterville area food pantry.

Governor Baldacci told the campers that he chose the planting of a vegetable garden not only because it will help feed people, but it will also help people make healthy choices.

"It is important for people of all ages to practice good health and nutrition," the Governor said. "When you eat healthy, you feel better, you work harder and you live longer. If you make smart dietary choices, you give yourself a better chance at succeeding across the board."

First Lady Michelle Obama is expected to speak later today on her commitment to community service. She will be keynoting the plenary session of the 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service in San Francisco. The First Lady's appearance launches United We Service, an extended call to service challenging all Americans to engage in meaningful and sustained community service. The initiative runs from today through September 11, the National Day of Service and Remembrance.

For more information on United We Serve, visit www.serve.gov

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Governor Signs Economic Development Legislation

June 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed legislation to expand the Pine Tree Zone program, a signature economic development tool that provides incentives for businesses to expand in Maine or move to the State. The bill the Governor signed expands Pine Tree Zones statewide, using a two-tiered system so that more economically challenged areas have a longer benefit period.

"The Pine Tree Zone program that we established in 2003 – with its inclusion and enhancement of all Maine's tax incentive tools for business development - is a proven economic development tool for the State," said the Governor. "The program has resulted in more opportunities for Maine workers and businesses."

"During these difficult economic times, it's vital that we continue to take aggressive steps to encourage business growth and job creation, including continued focus on target sectors like manufacturing and technology, expansion across Maine of tax free areas for them to grow in, and the lowering of taxes like our recent income tax reduction," said the Governor.

According to the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, at the end of 2008, there were a total of 213 Pine Tree Zone certified businesses in Maine, who reported their plans to create more than 6,500 jobs and invest $685 million. Those jobs are expected to generate $203 million in payroll.

Earlier this month, the Governor celebrated news in Auburn and Augusta of Pine Tree Zone businesses. In Auburn, TD Bank is expanding its presence and workforce. In Augusta, Bolduc Technology Group is relocating to the State.

"This bill comes at an important time," said the Governor. "Pine Tree Zones enable Maine to encourage growth internally and attract new businesses and along with them, quality jobs with good pay and benefits."

The bill, LD 1473, "An Act To Reaffirm Maine's Commitment to Business by Amending the Pine Tree Development Zone Laws," was sponsored by Rep. Nancy Smith (D-Monmouth).

A fact sheet of the Pine Tree Zone expansion bill follows. For additional information about Maine's Pine Tree Zone program, visit http://www.mainebiz.org/pinetreezones/default.asp

LD 1473

• Pine Tree Development Zone is a performance-based program; businesses do not receive benefits unless they create quality jobs and make additional investments.

• Quality jobs are full time, income at or above the county per capita average, provide access to group health insurance, and provide access to a qualified retirement plan (e.g. ERISA based plan)

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• Businesses must certify that they would not locate/relocate/expand 'but for' the benefits of the program.

• A business must be classified in 1 of 9 qualifying (targeted) sectors. These include Advanced Technologies for Forestry & Agriculture, Aquaculture & Marine Technology, Biotechnology, Composite Materials, Environmental Technology, Financial Services, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Precision Manufacturing.

• From 2003 through 2008, there have been 213 businesses certified. These businesses anticipate creating more than 6,500 jobs, $203 million in payroll, and $685 million in investments.

• Benefits include income tax credits, sales tax exemptions, employee income tax withholding (payroll tax) reimbursements, and access to reduced utility rates; these provide a nearly tax free period of benefits for the duration of a company's Pine Tree Development Zone certification.

• In today's economic climate, it's not a matter of Portland competing against Ft. Kent but rather Maine competing against other states and other countries.

• Effective January 2010, creates a statewide, two-tier program, which allows businesses in and/or expanding to Tier 2 locations to receive 5 years of benefits; Tier 1 locations offer access to 10 years of benefits.

• Tier 2 locations are municipalities located in Cumberland and York counties with unemployment rates that are closer in alignment with their labor market area's unemployment rate. All other municipalities are considered Tier 1.

• With this bill, and in these difficult economic times, in calendar year 2009 only, all of Maine is Tier 1 and provides 10 years of benefits to otherwise qualified businesses. The goal is to encourage development projects to make job creation and investment decisions sooner rather than later.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Environmental Legislation

June 22, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed two bills to improve Maine's environment and protect public health. LD 973, An Act To Provide for the Safe Collection and Recycling of Mercury-containing Lighting, and LD 1293, An Act To Require Citizen Notification of Pesticide Applications Using Aerial Spray or Air-carrier Application Equipment, were ceremonially signed in the Governor's Office with bill sponsor Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham), other legislators and supporters present.

"These bills advance Maine's reputation for being at the forefront of environmentally conscious policies," Governor Baldacci said. "Together, these initiatives continue to ensure the health and safety of our people and vibrant natural resources."

LD 973 requires manufacturers to share the burden of ensuring proper disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs. Manufacturers of bulbs that contain mercury will be required to implement a program for recycling the lamps from households by 2011.

LD 1293 requires land managers to notify abutters of the application of pesticides. People can also request to be on a registry of citizens who receive information on pesticide applications.

The bills go into effect Sept. 12, which is 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

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Recovery Act Education Stabilization Checks are in the Mail

June 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Department of Education is issuing almost $24 million of federal Recovery Act funds to school systems this week and next – the first of three waves of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that will be sent to school districts. The funds replenish the curtailment in State funds that went into effect in January as a result of the global recession and a significant drop in State revenues.

Stabilization funds are the most flexible of the Recovery Act funds for education and can be used for a broad array of educational purposes, including adult and family literacy, vocational education and modernization. Federal guidance urges that funds be used for one-time purposes such as energy or security improvements, as well as to purchase laptops for high school students and one-time professional development or educational planning grants.

"With this first payment to schools, in partnership with the federal government, we are helping relieve the fiscal burden for school districts at a challenging time," said Governor John E. Baldacci. "These funds, and the funds that will come in the second and third years of the program, provide tax relief, save jobs, inject funds into our economy and will support effective reforms and innovation in education."

Districts will receive another $43 million in federal Stabilization funds for 2009-2010, and $59 million for the 2010-2011 school year. The funds were intended to fill gaps created by loss of state revenue.

Districts have already received increases in federal Title I funds, for educating low-income students, and IDEA, used for special education funding.

Education Commissioner Sue Gendron said superintendents and school boards have taken a wise approach to using the funds.

"When a district invests in a new boiler or energy efficiency improvements, they are generating savings in future years," Commissioner Gendron said. "And when they invest in professional development, training, laptops, and educational planning, they are making wise limited-duration decisions that will pay educational dividends for years to come."

Commissioner Gendron said both kinds of investments are necessary to the educational and financial sustainability of schools.

The funds come with stringent federal reporting requirements aimed at ensuring effective use and transparency.

Not all districts will receive checks this week. Sixteen districts saw no curtailment in funds during the current year and so will not receive checks to replenish funds. Another 55 school systems have not filed the necessary State or federal paperwork that is required. This may include missing audits or federal reporting forms. These 55 districts are due to receive just under $3 million in funds.

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The Department is working with these school systems to bring their paperwork into State and federal compliance so they can receive the funds as soon as possible.

For more information, including a listing of the payments made and payments pending, go to www.maine.gov/education and click on the Federal Recovery Package link.

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Governor Baldacci Applauds Announcement of New CMMC Emergency Department

June 23, 2009

LEWISTON – Governor John E. Baldacci visited Central Maine Medical Center to participate in the announcement that the hospital will begin construction on a new Emergency Department and Laboratory. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of this year with occupancy in the summer of 2011.

Central Maine Medical Center officials say the Emergency Department is necessary because of overcrowding and space limitations of the current facility. The original space built in 1990 was designed to handle 25,000 patient visits annually. Officials say that the department is currently seeing 45,000 – 50,000 patients needing care. As a result, many patients have to wait for extended periods of time to be admitted or discharged.

"Central Maine Medical Center has met rigorous requirements, showing that the planned emergency department and laboratory are necessary to ensure the public's health and safety," Governor Baldacci said. "This project meets an immediate community need, but I am also pleased that CMMC will continue to work to reduce the high demand on emergency departments and build more community options."

"While they are expanding their emergency care, CMMC has also been working to promote prevention and chronic disease management," the Governor said. "Their Community Health Initiatives Fund, for example, is designed to expand prevention strategies with an emphasis on obesity. By addressing these issues, CMMC is helping us reduce the demand on the health care system and move forward in our goal to make Maine the healthiest state in the nation."

The new Emergency Department will feature 42 private treatment rooms, dedicated trauma resuscitation suites to allow all necessary resources to manage up to four trauma patients at a time, and updated HVAC and IT systems. The size of the laboratory will triple under the plan.

With the passage of the Federal Recovery Act, funds were made available for the State to make significant payments to hospitals, allowing resources to be available to partially fund the expansion. Other funding for the $45 million project is expected to come through existing assets and bond financing.

Governor Baldacci said that he is pleased the State has been a partner with CMMC to meet the needs of area residents.

"In the global recession, there have been increasing strains on our safety net," the Governor said. "That's why it's been even more important for us to ensure that our nonprofit hospitals are able to meet the demands of the communities."

The Governor was joined at the event by Congressman Michael Michaud, President of CMMC Laird Covey and President and CEO of Central Maine Healthcare Peter Chalke.

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Governor and Federal Officials Provide Update on Recovery Act Progress

June 24, 2009

SABATTUS - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that the State of Maine has made significant progress in meeting goals of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. According to the federal government, Maine is the first state to commit and advertise 100 percent of its Highway and Bridge funds under the Recovery Act. In addition, Maine is the first state to achieve the requirement to commit 50 percent the Recovery Act Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs.

Officials announced the State's accomplishments at the Sabattus Town Office. One of the four final projects to be advertised by the State for bridge and highway funds is the Route 9 reconstruction in Lisbon and Sabattus, involving 6.75 miles of rural road. The road is an important artery in the central Maine area, connecting the two towns with the Maine Turnpike. More than 6,000 vehicles a day use this road. Along with this reconstruction, MaineDOT began advertising a reconstruction of Route 1A in Ellsworth, rehabilitation of the substructure of the Deer Isle-Sedgwick Bridge, and replacement of the Spruce Head Bridge in South Thomaston. These four projects represent more than $30 million in Recovery Act funds.

"I'm pleased to be here today with the State's many partners to highlight Maine's success in Recovery Act implementation," said the Governor. "Critical infrastructure work to transportation, clean water and drinking water systems are improving quality of life and commerce throughout the State, providing good paying construction jobs, primarily through this summer and fall."

Data collected from mid-June shows that Maine had 30 bridge and highway Recovery projects underway, directly accounting for 757 jobs created or saved. A total of $130.7 million was awarded to Maine from the Recovery Act.

Most of $29 million Maine received for wastewater infrastructure is being used for projects under construction this summer. These funds will provide important economic benefits including creating an estimated 850 to 1350 jobs.

The Drinking Water Program has worked aggressively to put the $19.5 million in Recovery funds to good use. The Recovery funds were used to leverage base program funds and provide benefit to more than 58 projects totaling more than $40 million.

The Governor said that the Recovery Act is providing benefits for all Mainers.

"The Recovery Act is meeting the goals of creating and saving jobs and building the foundation for long-term economic growth," said the Governor.

The Governor was joined at press announcement by Jonathan McDade, Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration Maine Division; Stephen Perkins, Acting Deputy Regional Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency; representatives from Maine's Congressional Delegation; State

Legislators; State officials including Commissioner David Cole of the Maine Department of Transportation, Commission David Littell of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Nancy Beardsley, Director of the Division of Environmental Health at DHHS; local officials from the towns of Sabattus and Lisbon; and members of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments and the Androscoggin Transportation Research Center.

Earlier this week, the Maine Department of Education began issuing $24 million of federal Recovery Act funds to school systems, the first of three waves of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that will be sent to school districts.

For project lists and other information about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, visit www.maine.gov/recovery

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Governor Saddened to Hear of Death of Angelo Okot

June 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Angelo Okot, Chairman of the Sudanese Association in Maine.

The Governor, State Attorney General, and Portland police and municipal officials met with Okot and other representatives of the Sudanese community last month in the Governor's Office to discuss the safety concerns of the community.

"I respected Mr. Okot a great deal for his commitment to serving his community," said the Governor. "Angelo Okot was dedicated to ensuring the welfare of the Sudanese and other immigrant families in Maine."

Okot's son James Angelo Okot was shot and killed outside his workplace, Mercy Hospital, last year.

According to family members, Okot was killed in a traffic accident in his native Sudan.

"He wanted to go back and help his people in Sudan. His loss is a tragedy. I extend my sympathies to his family and to all those who he worked with and for in Maine."

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Renewable Energy Expansion

June 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1075, "An Act to Establish the Community based Renewable Energy Pilot Program." The legislation calls for a six-year pilot program to test incentives to expand renewable power generation by individuals and communities.

"Maine has firmly established itself as a national leader in the creation of renewable energy," said Governor Baldacci. "This bill expands our commitment to end our dependency on fossil fuels. The pilot program is an important tool to evaluate the potential of small scale, renewable power generation that can be put into the grid and used by other Maine homeowners and businesses."

The bill LD 1075 was amended in The Utilities and Energy Committee to merge of elements of two bills: LD 1450, which created incentives for homeowners to generate renewable energy; and LD 1075, which sought incentives for communities to do the same. The final bill also calls for the Public Utilities Commission to arrange for a "green power" purchasing offer, enabling consumers to voluntarily pay higher rates to buy power from renewable sources.

"This is another step that Maine is taking to end our dependency on oil, keep hard-earned Maine dollars here in the State and reduce carbon emissions," said the Governor.

At the signing, the Governor recognized Representative Bruce MacDonald (D-Boothbay), sponsor of LD 1075; Representative Herb Adams (D-Portland), sponsor of LD 1450; various Legislators who supported the bills, including House Speaker Hannah Pingree and Senator Barry Hobbins, Co-Chair of the Utilities and Energy Committee; and many renewable energy-focused organizations and private companies.

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Governor Baldacci Breaks Ground on First Educare Center in New England

June 25, 2009

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci today joined philanthropists, donors, supporters and local, State and federal officials to break ground on the first Educare Center in New England. The ceremony marked the beginning of the construction phase of the 37,000 square foot early learning center which will be located next to the George J. Mitchell Elementary School.

"In Maine, we have made important strides to invest in key infrastructure areas such as biotechnology, energy, transportation and K-16 education," Governor Baldacci said. "Research tells us that 90 percent of our children's brains are developed and wired for learning by the age of five. Yet, we spend less than four percent of public resources to support early learning and development."

Educare is a unique partnership between State and local government, private investors, and State and national foundations to fund the construction phase. Once the facility is built, the operational program will be managed and sustained through existing federal and State funds that flow through Waterville Public School and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program's Head Start.

Governor Baldacci said that Educare will bring jobs and opportunities to people in Central Maine.

"Once the facility is completed, Educare will employ at least 60 professionals year-round," the Governor said. "It will also bring in groups of college students working on their degrees in early childhood from Kennebec Valley Community College, the University of Maine at Farmington and others."

Doris Buffett inspired the Maine Educare partnership by committing $3 million as seed funds towards the center. The William and Joan Alfond Foundation has provided $2 million to be matched by the final $4 million to complete construction and create a start-up endowment. Recently, Governor Baldacci with the support of the Maine Legislature invested $2 million toward the Alfond match from Federal Recovery Act funds. Mr. and Mrs. Alfond and Mrs. Buffett were in Waterville today for the ceremony.

Governor Baldacci thanked members of the legislature for lending their support to the project.

"Speaker Hannah Pingree, Senate President Libby Mitchell, Senator Lisa Marrache, and Representatives Henry Beck and Pam Trinward all worked across party lines to inform colleagues about the value of Educare not only for Waterville, but for the entire State," Governor Baldacci said. "Their work has been invaluable to this project."

Educare Centers are uniquely designed to support the young child's social, emotional, and cognitive development during critical years of learning. Educational classrooms are organized as "community neighborhoods." Each neighborhood includes an infant and toddler room (birth to age 3) and preschool room (ages 4-5) creating continuity between and among staff and children as they develop and grow in the program together.

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Maine's Educare Center will join the eight completed centers nationally, all of which gained support from investors such as the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Kellogg Foundation among others.

The Maine Educare Center is scheduled to open in September of 2010.

For more information on Educare, visit www.educarecenters.org.

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Governor Baldacci Applauds Congressional Action on Economic Growth and the Environment

June 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement tonight on the passage of The American Clean Energy and Security Act by the U.S. House of Representatives.

"With their votes tonight, Rep. Mike Michaud and Rep. Chellie Pingree helped to secure our nation's energy future, strengthen our economy and create good jobs for Maine workers," Governor Baldacci said.

"The American Clean Energy and Security Act builds upon the strong environmental ethic that Maine leaders such as Ed Muskie and George Mitchell pioneered," Governor Baldacci said. "This bill is one of the most important environmental and economic initiatives of our generation."

"The legislation recognizes Maine's leadership in areas like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and renewable energy, and will support important industries in our State, including forestry, pulp and paper making, and clean energy production, which are critical to our economic future."

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Governor Breaks Ground on New Filtration Plant

June 29, 2009

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined employees of Aqua Maine to break ground on a new filtration plant that will serve the communities of Rockland, Rockport, Camden, Thomaston, Owls Head and Union. The project is being funded in part through resources from the Federal Recovery Act.

"This project is a great example of how the funds from the Recovery Act were intended," Governor Baldacci said. "This project is putting people to work, it is benefitting nearly 8,000 customers in this region and the facility will be LEED certified which means the environmental benefits will continue to be seen for generations."

The new filtration plant at Mirror Lake in Rockport will help meet new federal requirements for improved water quality. The membrane filtration technology also leaves a smaller building footprint; it uses fewer chemicals; and it has a more efficient process, wasting less water.

"Critical projects in Maine's infrastructure are improving quality of life and commerce throughout the State, providing good paying jobs," the Governor said. "This $7 million project is a great example of that, with just over half the total project cost coming from the Recovery Act."

Last week, Governor Baldacci announced that Maine is the first State to achieve the requirement to commit 50 percent of the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funds are administered by the Maine Drinking Water Program and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank as part of the federal funding package. Aqua Maine received $2.5 million at 0 percent interest and $1.1 million in grants for this project.

For more information on Aqua Maine, visit www.aquamaine.com

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Increase Guardianship Standards

June 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 944, An Act To Increase the Evidentiary Standard Required to Establish a Guardianship. The law creates a higher standard for a person to be placed under guardianship. A judge would have to find "clear and convincing" evidence that a person with a disability is incapacitated. The current benchmark is to find a "preponderance" of the evidence merits guardianship.

"This bill strikes a careful balance between the civil rights and other needs of Maine citizens with disabilities," said Governor Baldacci. "This legislation will hopefully allow more people to live independently, while assuring their health and safety."

Bill sponsor Rep. Mark Bryant (D-Windham) was at the ceremonial signing along with supporters of the legislation.

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Governor Baldacci Announces Habitat Restoration Funding

June 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned that Maine will receive two grants, totaling $7.7 million, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Maine will receive $6.1 million for the demolition of Great Works Dam on the Penobscot River and $1.6 million to replace problematic culverts, particularly Downeast, as part of Project SHARE, a collaboration between industry, the State and federal government on Atlantic salmon restoration.

"The investments included in the Recovery Act continue to have a profound impact on Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "This investment is important for the recovery of Atlantic salmon, will create jobs and demonstrates how a cooperative approach between the State and federal government can yield results."

Governor Baldacci learned of the two grants Monday during a telephone call with Jane Lubchenco, the administrator for NOAA.

Maine received roughly 20 percent of the funds it requested from NOAA as part of the Recovery Act, which is the highest funding ratio of any state in the country. According to NOAA, Congress approved $167 million for habitat restoration, which will fund 50 projects nationally. The habitat restoration funding in Maine is expected to create at least 60 jobs over two years.

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Governor's Statement on EPA Auto Emissions Decision

June 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today hailed the decision of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to grant a waiver to the State of California that enables the state to pursue higher automobile fuel efficiency standards. Maine and 12 other states and the District of Columbia have adopted the California clean air standards, which have languished for years at the federal level.

"Maine leads in pursuing energy independence and a clean environment, and this decision enables us to take another important step forward," said Governor Baldacci. "Reducing transportation Greenhouse Gas emissions is one of the highest priorities in the Maine Climate Action Plan. Transportation accounts for almost half of Maine's total carbon emissions."

"I appreciate that the states have a leader in the White House who understands the great benefits of promoting clean, renewable energy," said the Governor. "We look forward to working with our federal partners to end our dependence on foreign oil, increase our energy security, combat climate change and grow green jobs."

The Governor has been building strong public-private partnerships to increase weatherization and energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote development of clean, renewable energy.

"We have set the course for ambitious and achievable measures to reduce the stranglehold of fossil fuels on our pocketbooks and environment," said the Governor. "Combined, the actions we are taking will build private sector jobs in clean energy businesses, providing a much needed boost to our economy and putting our people to work in good jobs."

Comprehensive energy legislation was passed this year to reduce fossil fuel use and to streamline permitting for renewable energy development. And Maine was the first state government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources.

Maine is part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, an innovative regional approach to reducing carbon emissions. Maine has earned a total of more than $11.6 million since the first auction in September 2008. The money benefits Maine consumers through investments in energy efficiency and programs that reduce energy costs.

Information on the EPA's waiver granted to the State of California can be accessed at http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/ghgwaiver.pdf

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Governor Unveils Plans for Open Lighthouse Day in Maine

June 30, 2009

CAPE ELIZABETH – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced plans for the first ever open house of 52 operational lighthouses along the coast of Maine, to be held in September. The Governor was joined by officials from the Coast Guard, the Maine Office of Tourism and the American Lighthouse Foundation for the announcement, held at the Portland Head Light in Cape Elizabeth.

"From the Maine State quarter to many artists' renditions of Maine's coastline, the Maine lighthouse is an enduring symbol of our way of life," Governor Baldacci said. "For Mainers and visitors alike, Open Lighthouse Day will be a unique opportunity to learn more about the lighthouses, lighthouse keepers and the communities dotting our coastline."

Open Lighthouse Day is scheduled for 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009. The partnership between the State, the U.S. Coast Guard and American Lighthouse Foundation is intended to increase awareness of Maine's rich maritime history.

Governor Baldacci thanked the U.S. Coast Guard for coordinating the inaugural Open Lighthouse Day, the largest effort of its kind in the country.

More information about Open Lighthouse Day, participating lighthouses, community events taking place that weekend and other details can be found at www.lighthouseday.com

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Old Town Canoe to Expand Workforce

June 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said he was pleased that Johnson Outdoors Inc., the parent company of Old Town Canoe, has announced that up to 48 jobs will be created in Old Town. The company is consolidating its paddle sport brands to its Old Town facility in order to streamline operations and position itself for future growth.

"The State of Maine and the City of Old Town have worked very hard with Johnson Outdoors to ensure that Old Town Canoe was the location of choice to house its Watercraft business unit in one facility," said Governor Baldacci. "We appreciate the partner we have in Johnson Outdoors, and that the company recognizes that Maine's workforce and craftsmanship are second to none."

In addition, the State and city worked on a package of incentives to ensure that the company could meet its efficiency objectives best by expanding its operations in Maine.

According to Johnson Outdoors, Old Town was selected because of its depth of manufacturing capability and capacity for expansion. The company will transfer all operations in Old Town to a single location later this year. The new site is designed to be more efficient and to reduce energy use.

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Governor Signs Special Budget and Expenditure Order

July 1, 2009

Continues Fiscal State Spending Restraints

AUGUSTA –Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a Special Budget and Expenditure Order at the beginning of the State's Fiscal 2010-2011 cycle. The Governor has signed similar orders since 2003. This directive places a hiring freeze on vacant positions and limits overtime, travel and other expenses. The order allows for emergency exceptions.

"My Administration has been committed to restructuring government and reducing administration at all levels and in all areas," said Governor Baldacci. "This order is just one tool to keep in place critical measures to ensure Maine State Government operates efficiently and effectively."

A copy of the order follows:

01 FY 10/11

July 1, 2009

SPECIAL BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE ORDER OF JULY 1, 2009

WHEREAS, the State of Maine and National economies are experiencing significant economic challenges due to the national recession; and

WHEREAS, it is fiscally responsible to continue budgetary constraints that are currently in place;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order, effective immediately, that each State agency and department must review its programs and implement the following procedures:

Financial orders that request the transfer of balances of appropriations and allocations between line categories and accounts, that request the use of savings for project or limited period positions or that request allotment in excess of allocation, except Government/Student Intern positions, will not be approved unless the State Budget Officer determines such uses are necessary to protect the health or safety of the public, to meet payroll obligations, to fund legislatively approved salary increases and adjustments or are necessary to meet unavoidable legal obligations.

A hiring freeze remains in effect for all positions that are vacant or that become vacant, without regard to funding source. Department and agency heads should make every effort to streamline operations in order to avoid the filling of vacancies. Hiring decisions by department and agency heads will be limited by available Personal Services in General Fund accounts during FY 10.

Unscheduled overtime shall not be permitted except in emergency or other unavoidable circumstances and only with the prior approval of the department or agency head, or his or her designee.

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All travel must be reduced to the absolute minimum necessary to maintain effective operations with the following exceptions:

• Travel directly related to the care of residents, wards, foster children and other individuals under state care or protection.

• Travel required in the execution of law enforcement investigations, interstate contracts directly related to the extradition of an individual, or the transfer of an individual to or from a correctional facility.

• Travel directly involved in the securing of revenue, or that directly impacts revenue.

• Travel required in emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances. Alternatives to travel should be explored, especially the use of appropriate telecommunications technology.

All contracts, grants or purchases must be reviewed by each department and agency head and reduced to the absolute minimum necessary to maintain effective operations or to meet emergency situations. Each department or agency head will be responsible for making the determination that a contract, grant or purchase satisfies the emergency or cost effective operation standard in accordance with guidelines developed by the Division of Purchases. The Director of Purchases is authorized to return to a department or agency head any contracts, grants or purchases that are determined to be nonessential or that can be delayed or postponed. Federal Expenditures Fund accounts and Federal Block Grant Fund accounts are exempted, only if a General Fund match or other General Fund obligation is not required.

Nothing in this Executive Order may be interpreted to authorize departments and agencies to postpone the processing of invoices payable in fiscal year 2009-10. This Executive Order also is not intended to prevent state agencies and departments from addressing emergencies or imminent threats to health and safety, or from fulfilling legal obligations entered into prior to its effective date.

The Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2010, unless modified or rescinded by Executive Order. This Order supersedes 05 FY 01/02, 02 FY 02/03, 07 FY 02/03, 01 FY 03/04, 19 FY04/05, 26 FY 04/05, 01 FY 06/07, 17 FY 06/07, 01 FY 07/08 and 17 FY 08/09.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

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Governor Baldacci Dedicates Washington County Bridge to Harold West

July 1, 2009

MILBRIDGE – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in a ceremony to designate the Great South Bridge in Milbridge as the Harold West Bridge. The bridge was designated in honor of Harold West's more than 50 years of service to the town.

"Harold has faithfully served his town, his State and his nation for decades," Governor Baldacci said. "I have been lucky enough to have known Harold for a number of years. He is a public servant who has worked tirelessly to improve his community."

West, who celebrated his 85th birthday on Wednesday, was drafted into the Army before he was 20 years old. He served in World War II under General Patton. West returned home to Milbridge to settle down with his wife, Ramona, and raise two children. He worked in a garage for 24 years before joining the Maine Department of Transportation. West retired in 1987, but continued serving as a Milbridge selectman until 1995.

"I am proud to call him a friend, and I know many others in this area are proud to do the same," the Governor said.

A bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in April to designate the Great South Bridge as the Harold West Bridge.

In addition to Governor Baldacci, West was joined by members of his family, Rep. Dianne Tilton (R-Harrington) and other local officials for the ceremony.

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State Agencies Closed Friday and Monday

July 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reminded the public that Maine State government offices are closed on Friday, July 3, 2009, in observance of the Independence Day holiday.

Nearly all State agencies and offices will be closed on Monday, July 6, 2009, as a cost saving initiative of the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Biennial State Budget.

"Please plan ahead for any services you may need from State agencies during this and the other State government shutdown days," said Governor Baldacci. "When scheduling the days, every effort has been made to reduce the impact to Maine people, businesses and communities."

The public is encouraged to check with a specific agency before seeking State services on Monday, July 6, 2009.

The reference to the State closures is Public Law 2009, Chap. 213, Part SSS:

http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chapters/PUBLIC213-PtCtoEnd.asp

This is the first of 10 closure days between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. The other dates that State agencies and offices will be closed are as follows:

Friday, August 7, 2009

Friday, September 4, 2009

Friday, October 9, 2009

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Friday, January 15, 2010

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Friday, March 12, 2010

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Friday, May 28, 2010

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First Lady Highlights Local Foods as Part of Independence Day Celebrations

July 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – First Lady Karen Baldacci has joined the Maine-based nonprofit, Kitchen Gardeners International, to promote locally-sourced food for the 4th of July. The First Lady said that home and locally grown produce, as well as Maine lobster and mussels, have long been a staple for the family's Independence Day lunch.

"The holiday is special because we have a family reunion and focus on delicious, fresh Maine foods," said the First Lady. "We appreciate the abundance and variety of what Maine farmers and fisherman produce, and it's an important part of our celebration."

The First Lady said that traditional Independence Day fare includes Maine lobster; potatoes; blueberries and strawberries; and home-grown salad greens and peas.

Kitchen Gardeners International is currently promoting "Food Independence Day" to encourage Americans to source their holiday ingredients from local and sustainable sources.

The First Lady has promoted locally grown foods and has established on the Blaine House grounds a vegetable garden with raised beds and cold frames, as well as a Victorian Green House that has an herb garden. The First Lady saves seeds from vegetable plants and flowers. She and the Blaine House chef incorporate Maine foods for the family and for official functions. She has also filmed more than 20 shows with the local Time/Warner Cable station to share stories of Maine farmers and growers and how to source foods locally.

Maine is the largest producer of brown eggs and wild blueberries in the world, ranks eighth in the country in production of potatoes and second for maple syrup. The small, diversified farms across Maine supply niche markets with organic produce and meat, value-added products as well as fiber and other products.

For more information about the Kitchen Gardeners International campaign, visit http://www.foodindependenceday.org/

For information on Maine food and farms, visit http://www.getrealmaine.com/

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Task Force to Investigate Logger Contracting in Northern Maine

July 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – The Maine Department of Labor has formed a multi-agency task force to investigate logger contracting practices in Northern Maine to ensure compliance with Maine equipment ownership law and the federal foreign labor certification process.

"There are numerous allegations and rumors about inappropriate activity concerning Canadian labor in Maine's woods," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "We are putting the resources on the ground to look into the situation, determine if there are violations and take necessary action if any are confirmed."

Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman will lead the task force on the ground in Northern Maine this week. In addition to staff from the Department of Labor, the task force will be supported by the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Conservation, Maine Revenue Service and the Department of Public Safety.

"Our team includes specialists in areas of employment services, wage and hour, job banks and immigrant labor," said Commissioner Fortman. "We will also be calling upon the expertise of other resources in State government when necessary."

Members of the task force will talk with parties involved in logger contracting and will review practices, including whether Maine workers have an adequate opportunity to apply for job openings as required by federal law and whether logging equipment used in the Maine woods is purchased or leased by the employer through bona fide transactions as required by Maine law.

The requirements for equipment ownership are in Title 26, section 872 of Maine law, which was updated during the First Session of the 124th Legislature. Fines for this civil violation range from $3,000 to $15,000.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Legislation to Encourage Medical School Students from Maine

July 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 853, An Act To Encourage Maine Residents To Attend Medical School and Practice in Maine. The legislation creates the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program, which provides a tuition subsidy for Maine residents to support their medical education at Maine Medical Center, Eastern Maine Medical Center or the University of New England.

"We have a need for more primary care physicians and those who serve in rural areas of the State," Governor Baldacci said. "Research shows that doctors tend to settle near the hospitals where they complete their training. I know that given the chance young doctors will stay in Maine."

The tuition subsidy will cover half the cost of attendance annually, up to $25,000, for eligible students who enter qualifying Maine-based medial school programs. The revolving fund will be administered by the Finance Authority of Maine.

"This is an important step for our State," the Governor said. "It is one which will provide great opportunities for our talented Maine youth and which will ensure Maine has a health care workforce to meet the needs of our people."

Bill sponsor Sen. Lisa Marrache (D-Kennebec) was at the ceremonial signing along with supporters of the legislation.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Legislation Protecting Construction Workers

July 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1456, An Act To Ensure that Construction Workers are Protected by Workers' Compensation Insurance.

Under the new law, a person performing construction work at a construction site is presumed to be an employee of the hiring agent for the purpose of worker's compensation unless the person meets the definition of a construction subcontractor.

"This bill is one important step in resolving employee misclassification, the impact of which is felt among Maine workers, employers and the general public," Governor Baldacci said. "Our workers lose vital employment protections and our employers are put at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace as they subsidize business costs for businesses that misclassify. This bill balances the playing field in these areas for workers compensation."

The new rules go into effect January 1, 2010.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. John Martin (D-Eagle Lake), co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

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New England Governors Pursuing Joint Regional Vision for High Speed Rail

July 13, 2009

States Pursue Stimulus Funds to Strengthen Existing Rail Network, Connect Cities, and Spark Economic Growth

AUGUSTA – The New England Governors today announced they are working together on a coordinated regional vision for high speed rail that will connect major cities and airports, and support economic growth throughout the region. The Vision for the New England High Speed and Intercity Rail Network lays out key projects to strengthen passenger and freight rail service along new and existing rail corridors. The goal is to double passenger rail ridership in the Northeast by 2030.

"Our coordinated efforts are important to the economic vitality of New England," said Governor John E. Baldacci. "Extending and improving our rail system will build our economy, promote energy efficiency and increase the quality of life for Maine people and other New England residents and businesses."

The Governors have asked their Transportation chiefs to meet regularly with the New England Congressional delegation and work to advance their rail initiatives with coordinated applications for high speed rail grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, while also pursuing other federal funding opportunities. On Friday July 10, the states submitted pre-applications as part of the competitive grant process. In August the states will meet in Vermont at a high speed rail summit to continue their push for a strong high speed rail network in New England.

"It's significant that we've been able to develop a strategic, regional vision for passenger rail in New England," said MaineDOT Commissioner David Cole. "Working in cooperation with our neighboring states, we'll be better able to harmonize operations, position ourselves for funding opportunities, and define how we fit into the nation's passenger rail network."

The six key projects in the states' vision are:

• The Downeaster service, which operates on a route included in the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor between Boston and Portland, is a national model for the successful introduction of new intercity passenger rail service. The states along the Downeaster Route are working together to improve the infrastructure, with the goal of reducing the travel time between Boston and Portland to two hours and increasing capacity to support seven daily round trips. This project also includes the Downeaster Extension and rehabilitation of approximately 30 miles of existing rail to Class III, which will support the extension of the Amtrak Downeaster intercity passenger rail service from Portland to Brunswick, with a stop in Freeport.

• New Hampshire's Capital corridor will create easily accessible passenger rail service for more than 500,000 residents of Southern New Hampshire with stops in the cities of Concord, Manchester, Nashua and Boston. The rail line will also stop at Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, creating a much-needed

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connection for tourists and travelers from across northern New England. Eventually, this service will extend north to White River Junction, VT and to Montreal fulfilling the vision of this designated High-Speed Rail Corridor.

• Vermont's Western Corridor will provide direct service down the western side of the state connecting Burlington, Rutland, and Bennington with Albany and New York City via the Empire Corridor.

• Massachusetts will return the Vermonter to its original route through western Massachusetts via the Knowledge Corridor. This effort, supported by the State of Vermont, is a vivid example of the ongoing collaboration of two states working together to improve service and increase the number of rail passengers. The Knowledge Corridor between Springfield and White River Junction provides connection between the Boston to New Haven and the Boston to Montreal legs of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor.

• Through Connecticut's leadership, the group will work double track and replace bridges on the Springfield Line that serves the cities of New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield in order to provide the foundation for the larger rail network. Expanded train service will provide key connections between New York City, Bradley International Airport and will allow further development of the inland high speed rail line between Boston and New York.

• Providing the connection between Providence and Boston to TF Green Airport in Rhode Island via the Northeast Corridor as well as enhancing passenger service south of Providence will build on the long term transportation partnership between Rhode Island and Massachusetts. In addition, Rhode Island is working with Amtrak on capacity improvements along the Northeast Corridor in Southern Rhode Island that will permit bi-directional overtakes for intercity passenger rail, benefiting all users of the corridor while providing for future commuter rail infrastructure at Kingston Station.

Other projects the states will pursue include efforts by Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts to develop corridor plans for the northern half of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor, which extends from Boston to Portland and beyond and from Boston through Concord, NH, Vermont and terminating in Montreal. Efforts to develop corridor plans for the Boston to New Haven and Boston to Montreal segments of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor via the Inland Route through Worcester and Springfield are also being pursued. The Inland Route is also important as New England's largest freight rail corridor. Massachusetts will continue its investment in the South Coast Rail project and continues to be supportive of building a connection between the North and South regional rail networks.

For decades the New England states have successfully worked through the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) to promote promoting passenger rail service in the Northeast. The completion for the electrification of the Northeast Corridor in 2000 is a prime example of the successful long term advocacy for passenger rail. The development of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor will fill in the gaps of the region's network and be a critical element in achieving the Northeast Governors' goal to double passenger ridership in the northeast corridor by 2030.

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The text of the letter sent to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood follows.

July 10, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood, Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are pleased to submit for your review the Vision for the New England High Speed and Intercity Rail Network. Together we are pursuing key rail projects that will build a strengthened passenger and freight rail network for New England to connect major cities and airports, and that will spur economic development throughout our region.

At the direction of our Governors we are working together collaboratively on our vision of a future regional rail system that shares your goals of pursuing safe and efficient transportation choices that will enhance economic competitiveness and promote livable communities.

This bold vision responds directly to the investment by President Obama and the U.S. Congress of eight billion dollars for High-Speed and Intercity Rail as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). We are working to advance our regional rail initiatives through coordinated applications for ARRA high speed intercity passenger rail grants.

The enclosed Vision document and map details our collective priorities including six key projects we believe will provide fast and frequent rail service that will promote energy efficiency by convincing people to leave their car at home while boosting our regional economy through enhanced movement of freight and passengers.

This coordinated effort follows decades of collaboration among New England states to build and strengthen our regional rail network. Our Vision will fill the gaps in our current rail network and help achieve our Governors' goal of doubling passenger ridership in the northeast corridor by 2030.

We look forward to working together with you to ensure that our vision becomes reality for the long term benefit of the citizens of New England.

Sincerely,

James Aloisi, Jr., Secretary

Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation

George N. Campbell, Commissioner

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New Hampshire Department of Transportation

David A. Cole, Commissioner

Maine Department of Transportation

David C. Dill, Deputy Secretary of Transportation

Vermont Agency of Transportation

Michael P. Lewis, Director

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Joseph Marie, Commissioner

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Cc: Joseph C. Szabo, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

Joseph H. Boardman, President and CEO, Amtrak

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Governor Nominates Efficiency Maine Trust Board Members

July 13, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today named seven members of the Board of the Efficiency Maine Trust. Legislation passed into law earlier this year set aggressive goals to end Maine's dependency on foreign and fossil fuels. The Trust and its Board were created under this new law to design, coordinate and integrate energy efficiency, weatherization and alternative energy programs for all energy consumers in Maine.

The seven nominees are: Michelle Atherton of Orrington; James Atwell of Falmouth; Adam Lee of Cumberland Center; Naomi Mermin of Portland; Glenn Poole of Orrington; John Rohman of Bangor; and Tom Tietenberg of Waterville.

"To achieve a long-term solution to reduce the stranglehold of fossil fuels on our pocketbooks and environment, we need dedicated individuals to provide the knowledge, drive and experience to lead the board of Efficiency Maine Trust," said Governor Baldacci. "I am pleased to nominate these highly capable individuals, who I am confident will continue Maine on this ambitious path we have laid. We need to develop clean, renewable energy and pursue green jobs, and to do so in a way that encourages private partnerships."

Atherton has owned New Form Building Systems Inc. since 2004. The company markets and sells building materials, including energy efficient materials. Atherton is a civil engineer who served as a project engineer for the Connecticut Department of Transportation from 1995 to 2001. Atherton received an undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, Mass., and a master's degree from Central Connecticut State University.

Atwell has served as a senior project manager at Sevee & Maher Engineers Inc. since 1993. Prior to that, he worked 24 years at ABB Environmental Services Inc., where he was promoted to vice president. Atwell currently serves as the chair of the Board of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. He is co-chair and a founding member of the E2 Tech Council, a 501c(3) organization that provides a technical resource to Maine on environmental and energy issues. Atwell had been a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine Technology Institute from 1999 to 2007, serving as chair from 2001 to 2003. Atwell earned a B.S. and a M.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Maine.

Lee has been with Lee Auto Mall for 22 years, serving as president since 1997. He is the current chair of the Maine Energy Conservation Board and has received environmental awards from the Natural Resources Council of Maine and the Maine League of Conservation Voters. Lee is a graduate of Vassar College.

Mermin owns Naomi Mermin Consulting, which she has operated for the past seven years. Her practice currently focuses on energy efficiency. She is the 2009 chair of the U.S. Green Building Council Maine Board of Directors. Mermin previously taught graduate classes in public health and environmental health at Tufts University. From 2000 to 2002, Mermin served as executive director of the Asthma

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Regional Council, and from 1993 to 2002 she served as director of the New England Lead Coordinating Committee. Mermin earned an undergraduate degree from Cornell University and a Masters in Business Administration from Boston University.

Poole is Manufacturing Support Manager – Energy for Verso Paper LLC, managing energy for Verso's four mills. He has worked at the Bucksport mill since 1972. Poole currently serves on the Energy Conservation Board. He earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Maine.

Rohman has been a partner at WBRC Architects Engineers since 1978, and currently serves as the President and CEO of the firm. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, and a former Bangor City Council member (serving as mayor in 2001). He is a member of the Maine Arts Commission. Rohman holds bachelor's degrees from the University of Maine and Husson University.

Tietenberg is retired and a Mitchell Family Professor of Economics, Emeritus, at Colby College. He currently serves as a trustee of the Energy and Carbon Savings Trust and is a member of the Maine Energy Conservation Board. Tietenberg held a variety of positions at Colby College since 1977, including director of the Environmental Studies Program. He is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He holds a master's degree from the University of the East, in the Philippines, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future was passed as emergency legislation, meaning it went into effect upon the Governor's signature, June 12, 2009. The law established the Efficiency Maine Trust, which brings together under one roof Maine's energy rebate, efficiency and conservation programs. Among other provisions, the law established the goal to weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030 and reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030.

The other two members of the Trust, under the Statute, are the Director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security and the Director of the Maine State Housing Authority. The seven individuals nominated by the Governor must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy and confirmed by the Senate.

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Governor Celebrates 10 Years of Maine.gov

July 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the 10th anniversary of the State's official Web site, www.maine.gov . The Web site stemmed from an e-government initiative created by the Maine Legislature in 1998. The Information Resource of Maine (InforME) began operating the State's Web site in 1999 and provides online services including data searches, filings, permits, licenses, mapping, and reporting functions.

"When the InforME statute was created by the Legislature 10 years ago, the Internet was still emerging, but everyone involved knew of the potential it had to better serve the public," Governor Baldacci said. "For the past 10 years, InforME has created and maintained the State's online presence through Maine.gov and it has become an essential service to citizens and to government."

Some of the more than 400 online services offered through Maine.gov include the online vehicle registration program, Rapid Renewal; the ability to purchase hunting and fishing licenses; corporate services such as annual report filing; professional license renewals; and requesting and submitting absentee ballots.

"Online government services bring convenience to citizens and encourage citizen participation in government," the Governor said. "Online services also create efficiencies for government. Citizens and businesses increasingly go online to find government information and perform government interaction."

InforMe and Maine's Chief Information Officer Dick Thompson have unveiled a new design and new features for Maine.gov, including a new media gallery, a catalog of public data available for download and new multi-media options.

The Web site has ranked among the top in the nation year after year for its design, usability and online services. Most recently, Maine was ranked No. 1 for Digital Governance in a report by the American Society for Public Administration.

In honor of the 10th anniversary, Governor Baldacci proclaimed July 13, 2009, as eGovernment Day in the State of Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, The Information Resource of Maine (InforME) was established to serve as a self-supporting and cost-effective electronic gateway to provide access to the State's public information for individuals, businesses and other entities through Maine.gov, the State's official Web site for eGovernment applications and services; and

WHEREAS, InforME has provided rational, standardized and comprehensive electronic services to the people of Maine by increasing accessibility to public information sources; and

WHEREAS, InforME has provided such public services that have created opportunity for private-public partnership, inter-agency cooperation and innovative use of public information; and

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WHEREAS, InforME has provided these public services without any additional tax burden to the citizens of Maine through utilization of private capital and appropriate payment for the same; and

WHEREAS, Maine is celebrating ten years of this valuable resource,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim July 13, 2009 as

eGovernment Day

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Establish Commission on Indigent Legal Services

July 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1132, An Act To Establish the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services.

The law establishes an independent commission responsible for the financing and operation of indigent services. Previously, a lawyer would be provided by the court to a person who is unable to afford his or her own representation and who is either a defendant in criminal proceedings, someone facing involuntary commitment, or at risk of losing parental rights. The commission will also have the ability to recommend ways to improve the quality of those services.

Governor Baldacci credited those involved in working on the legislation for helping Maine take an important step forward.

"A group of very dedicated individuals studied the way indigent legal services are currently provided," Governor Baldacci said. "They issued a valuable report with recommendations to alleviate some of the problems with the current system. This bill contains one of those important recommendations, ensuring that all Mainers – regardless of their ability to pay – have access to effective representation."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Sen. Barry Hobbins (D-York), Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley, Justice Robert W. Clifford, co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

The bill was passed as emergency legislation, meaning it went into effect with the Governor's signature on June 17.

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Governor Requests Federal Disaster Assistance

July 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci yesterday requested the President to declare a major disaster for Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and Washington Counties as a result of heavy rain, hail, damaging winds, flooding, erosion and landslides which impacted the State during the time period of June 18 through July 8. Preliminary damage assessments estimate public damage in these counties to total more than $2.5 million.

"Very heavy rains experienced earlier this summer led to a great deal of damage, including roadways, other public infrastructure," said Governor Baldacci. "Response to the clean-up, repair and recovery are overwhelming budgetary resources. Federal assistance will help impacted communities and the State fully recover from the extraordinary weather occurrences we experienced."

Additionally, a request from Robert McAleer, Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency, was sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Acting Regional Administrator to request a preliminary damage assessment for Piscataquis County. Piscataquis County could therefore potentially be added as an eligible county if a declaration is received.

The Governor's letter to the President follows.

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama

President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. Paul Ford, Acting Regional Administrator

FEMA Region One

99 High Street, 6th Floor

Boston, MA, 02110

Dear President Obama:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and Washington

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Counties in the State of Maine as a result of heavy rain, hail, damaging winds, flooding, erosion and landslides which impacted the State during the time period of June 18th through July 8th.

According to the National Weather Service, weather in Maine from June 18th through July 8th was dominated by a cold, upper atmospheric low pressure system. The upper-level system started developing over New England on June 18 as an area of surface low pressure moved east from the Great Lakes and then intensified off the mid-Atlantic coast. The upper level system became entrenched over New England on the 21st, and then remained over the region through the 8th of July.

The upper-level low brought cool and very wet weather to the state. During the period, the precipitation was enhanced by strong east to southeast onshore winds that developed as a series of surface low pressure centers developed and persisted off the Mid-Atlantic coast. In addition, the upper level system brought cold air into higher levels of the atmosphere which helped destabilize the atmosphere and caused numerous showers and thunderstorms with locally heavy rains. With the upper level system almost directly over the state, the winds aloft were light, which caused the heavy showers and thunderstorms that developed to move very slowly.

Total rainfall amounts during the period ranged from more than 2 inches across northern Maine to 8 to 10 inches along the coast and across western Maine, with locally higher amounts. The maximum observed precipitation occurred in the mountains where more than 12 inches of rain was observed in Phillips and Rumford.

Embedded within this period of rain were some shorter-term heavy rainfall events. Much of the precipitation at locations along the coast fell between June 19 and June 21. In the western Maine mountains, much of the precipitation fell from June 26th through June 30th. Another period of very heavy rain hit coastal areas from July 2 to July 4, and another period impacted both coastal and interior Maine July 6 to 8th.

Throughout the period, roads were closed as massive washouts disrupted Maine's rural transportation systems. Many communities patched up damaged roadways to allow passage of daily and emergency traffic, only to see those repairs wash away again. The Maine Department of Transportation was responding continuously throughout the incident period, attempting to repair state roads, and assist in local road repairs. A state-owned bridge in Oxford County was lost, requiring major detour of traffic. This roadway remains closed. Major landslides occurred in at least two locations, impacting both private property and public infrastructure. Since the ground is saturated and stream flows remain high, more landsides are very possible, other weakened infrastructure may still fail, and any further rainfall could once again produce emergency conditions in the state.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. In anticipation of emergency conditions, I directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Thursday June 18, 2009 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. The State Emergency Operations Center was on alert during this entire period. On July 2, 2009, I requested a joint Federal, State, and local survey of the damaged areas in Franklin, Hancock, Oxford and Waldo Counties, and then on extended that request to

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include Knox, Lincoln, Somerset and Washington Counties. Preliminary assessments indicated the most severe impacts were to roads, culverts and bridges in the affected counties.

During the response phase of this event, the resources of local communities, and those of State agencies available without a State of Emergency in place, were adequate to respond to local emergency needs. Therefore, while prepared to do so, I did not declare a State of Emergency during this period. However, the response in many cases overwhelmed budgetary resources, leaving nothing with which to make permanent repairs.

The Joint Federal/State/Local Preliminary Damage Assessment for public damage began July 7, 2009. Town and state agency reports of damages, verified by the PDA, equate to over $2.5 million, $1.98 per capita statewide.

Thankfully, no injuries or deaths were reported during this period in Maine. However, many private roads and driveways were flooded or damaged, isolating families and preventing emergency vehicles from accessing their homes. State and local budgets, already adversely affected by a nationwide recession have been exhausted by the convergent effects of seven major disasters since May of 2006. Several communities tell us they have verified damages well above their entire road maintenance budget.

The State of Maine has just enacted a budget cutting $500 million, and includes reduction of state subsidies to counties and towns, sacrifices of pay and benefits by state employees, mandatory shutdown days and other financial impacts on services to Maine people. Future road maintenance plans have had to be severely scaled back because of the downward spiral in the gas tax revenues which fund that maintenance. In addition, the constant rainfall has occurred concurrent with the start of Maine's tourist and recreation season, a major source of revenue for our state.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster (as applicable under the Public Assistance Program) at this time. I intend to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place.

In addition, I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosure B. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure C.

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Damage assessments are ongoing in other areas of the state. If the need warrants, I intend to request additional assistance.

State, local and private resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster include: repairs to the Federal Aid Highway System and state highways, temporary repair assistance to local governments, repair to state roads and bridges and damage assessment by the Maine Department of Transportation; alerting, warning and traffic control by the Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation and county and local public safety agencies; emergency assistance to private citizens by local responders and volunteer agencies; landslide assessment and technical assistance to local governments by the Maine Department of Conservation; Maine Geological Survey; emergency coordination and damage assessment by the Maine Emergency Management Agency and affected County Emergency Management Agencies and assistance to affected families by social service and voluntary agencies.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total State and local expenditures are expected to exceed $629,000 in accordance with the table in Enclosure D.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Ceremonially Signs Legislation Clarifying Saco Bay Boundaries

July 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1119, An Act To Clarify the Municipal Jurisdiction of a Portion of Saco Bay.

The law creates some boundary changes designed to address development in Saco Bay. The boundary changes will only be able to go forward if the Town of Old Orchard Beach adopts a zoning ordinance relating to marinas that includes standards that are at least as strict as those adopted in the City of Saco.

"It's important that we work toward mutually-beneficial solutions to economic development," Governor Baldacci said. "This bill puts the Saco and Old Orchard Beach communities on a good path to find such solutions. This is a wonderful example of two communities working together toward a shared goal."

In addition to the boundary changes, the law enables the two municipalities to create a working group to explore regulatory jurisdictions for the future development of Saco Bay.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. George Hogan (D-Old Orchard Beach), supporters and officials from the Town of Old Orchard Beach and the City of Saco.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill Allowing Pharmacists to Administer Immunizations

July 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1223, An Act To Allow Pharmacists To Administer Certain Immunizations.

The law allows pharmacists who have met certain requirements to administer a number of vaccines, including influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine, tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis vaccine and others.

"This bill expands access to important preventive health care services," Governor Baldacci said. "In particular, I know the Maine Center for Disease Control supports the efforts to provide influenza vaccines to as many people as possible. I am pleased to sign this bill into law."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. George Hogan (D-Old Orchard Beach), co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

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Governor Applauds UMaine Announcement of $20 Million Grant for Sustainability Initiative

July 15, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci and other State leaders joined University of Maine and University of Southern Maine officials on Wednesday morning to announce a $20 million National Science Foundation EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) grant for a wide-ranging new project called the Sustainability Solutions Initiative.

The research portion of this five-year Maine EPSCoR initiative, led by UMaine's Senator George J. Mitchell Center, will bring together core research teams from the University of Maine and USM, as well as government and industry stakeholders, to improve the science and practice of sustainable development.

"The project recognizes that our State's identity is inseparable from its natural resources and our future economic prosperity depends on our ability to distinguish what makes Maine so special," said Governor Baldacci. "To preserve and build on Maine's quality of place we must address issues such as sprawl, management of our forests and climate change. This project will provide us with expanded options in our pursuit of renewable energy, and management of our precious resources. It's important to our environment and our economic future."

The initiative will create partnerships with many of Maine's colleges and universities for research and education efforts designed to advance economic and community development while protecting the environment. It will also provide support for 200 to 300 jobs, mainly in the research sector, with the ultimate goal of building capacity for generating solutions to a range of challenging problems.

About 150 people assembled at the Wells Conference Center on the Orono campus for this morning's formal program announcement.

"I am delighted by this exciting news, and am convinced that the Mitchell Center, the University of Maine, and their many partners can play a pivotal role in creating a brighter economic, social, and environmental future for the people of Maine," Sen. George Mitchell, who was unable to attend the event, said in a prepared statement.

"At UMaine, we are pleased to play a central role in this project but, even more important, we are delighted that virtually every Maine institution of higher learning, plus businesses, government agencies and other constituencies, will join in this effort," said UMaine President Robert Kennedy, who hosted the event and made the formal announcement. "This is when Maine is at its best, when we work together to pool our expertise and share our resources while working toward a common goal."

In addition to the five-year EPSCoR grant, UMaine will be contributing $1 million per year for five years from its State-supported Maine Economic Improvement Fund allotment. An additional $1 million per

year of in-kind contributions will also be contributed by UMaine and all collaborating partners in the form of faculty salaries and use of research facilities.

Initially, the project will include a focus on problems related to urbanization, forest management and climate change. For example, portions of southern Maine have experienced rapid sprawl while record sales of private forest lands and mill closures are transforming the social and economic fabric of northern and western Maine. To address these multifaceted problems, the research team includes more than 30 faculty members with expertise in a wide range of fields, including environmental science, engineering, economics, communication and public policy.

EPSCoR is a federal program directed at states that have historically received smaller portions of federal research and development funding. The program provides states with financial support to develop partnerships between their higher education institutions, industry, government, and others to affect lasting improvements in infrastructure, capacity, and national competitiveness.

Maine EPSCoR at the University of Maine is responsible for administering and implementing the NSF EPSCoR program for the state.

For more information see www.maine.edu/epscor

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Governor Requests Assistance for Maine Shellfish Industry

July 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today sent a letter to Maine's Congressional Delegation requesting federal emergency aid to assist Maine's shellfish industries affected by red tide and flood closures along the Maine coastline. At only halfway through the harvesting season, the estimated impact of the devastation to the industry is not yet known, but officials at the Maine Department of Marine Resources anticipate adverse conditions may require weeks more of closures to harvesting along Maine's coast.

"The shellfish industry in Maine is one of the backbones of our economy," said Governor Baldacci. "The earlier severe rains combined with historically high levels of red tide are having a catastrophic impact on the industry. Funds are needed to help those impacted, while efforts for long-term solutions for red tide strikes are also needed."

The Governor praised the consistent support of Maine's Congressional Delegation to aid the State's efforts to mitigate damage to the shellfish industry.

The Department of Marine Resources' Red Tide Hotline can be accessed toll-free at 1-800-232-4733 or online at

http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public_health/closures/shellfishhotline.htm

The text of the Governor's letter follows.

July 17, 2009

Dear Senators Snowe and Collins and Representatives Michaud and Pingree:

I am writing to respectfully request that you explore what options may exist to obtain Federal emergency relief money for Maine's important shellfish industry. As of the end of last week, virtually the entire coastline of this State was closed to the harvesting of shellfish. In fact, much of our coast has been closed for many weeks now due to severe and widespread rainfall this spring and early summer as well as the historic levels and widespread presence of paralytic shellfish poisoning (red tide).

The combination of the coast-wide events of red tide and flood closures has devastated Maine's shellfish harvesters and dealers. These events could not have come at a worse time for the industry; falling as they have during our peak summer visitor season – annually the most productive and lucrative for our shellfish fishermen. We are only half-way through the harvesting season at this time, and the Maine Department of Marine Resources believes the impact of red tide and flood closures could potentially last for months to come.

As you are aware, Maine's shellfish industry (mussels, oysters, soft-shell clams, mahogany quahogs, etc.) is an extremely valuable and important one to our entire State and especially our coastal communities.

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Hundreds of individuals (wild and aquaculture harvesters, wholesale and retail dealers) are reliant to varying degrees on this fishery to sustain their families, with the total positive economic impact to the State estimated between $40 million and $50 million dollars annually.

There is no end in sight for the significant red tide that has inundated our coastal waters, and the full extent of the damage is not yet known. My office and our Department of Marine Resources are fielding calls from residents who harvest shellfish for a living and who are now unsure how to pay the bills that are before them. I urge you to work closely with you colleagues to help find funds needed to bring some emergency financial relief to our affected citizens. As the season continues, the Maine Department of Marine Resources will be able to calculate the impact of the combined coastal events that are currently ravaging the shellfish industry.

In addition, I respectfully request that you consider funding to allow Maine's Department of Marine Resources to expand its severely undersized public health laboratory and Maine Marine Patrol facility located in Lamoine. Doing so would greatly benefit our eastern Maine shellfish fishermen by allowing sufficient equipment and staffing to adequately serve their needs.

Please let me know if I can provide you with any further information regarding the requests I have made. And please know that, on behalf of Maine's citizens, I greatly appreciate your willingness to address these important issues as best you can.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Mourns Death of Solider from Maine

July 20, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

PV2 Lawrence G. Gowell II died Saturday. PV2 Gowell was visiting family in Litchfield while on leave from Germany.

"It is always extremely difficult news to hear of the death of a member of the Armed Forces," Governor Baldacci said. "This soldier made many sacrifices in his young life to serve his country. Our hearts and prayers are extended to his family as the State of Maine mourns the death of a brave soldier."

Governor Baldacci has spoken with the PV2 Gowell's family to express condolences on behalf of the State.

Governor Baldacci has ordered flags to be flown at half-staff in the Town of Litchfield on the day of PV2 Gowell's funeral.

No additional information is available at this time.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Mourns Passing of Carlton Willey

July 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of Carlton Willey, former Major League Baseball player and resident of Cherryfield. Willey pitched eight years in the Major Leagues, first for the Milwaukee Braves and then for the New York Mets. As a member of the Milwaukee Braves, he appeared in the 1958 World Series and that same year was named Rookie of the Year by The Sporting News.

"Carlton Willey is a legend in Maine not only for his success in baseball, but for the way he lived his life," said Governor Baldacci. "He was a generous man and a treasure to the State."

Governor Baldacci recalled visiting Willey two years ago. The friends sat around Willey's kitchen table and recalled old baseball memories.

"My thoughts and prayers go out to Carlton Willey's family and to all the many friends he made over the years," said the Governor. "The community is a richer place for the many years he spent in Maine and the wonderful gifts of friendship he bestowed to so many."

State of Maine
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Governor Baldacci Announces New Manufacturing Jobs in Burnham

July 21, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that International Woodfuels will be co-locating at the Pride Sports manufacturing facility in Burnham, creating at least 45 new jobs. International Woodfuels, a leading wood pellet provider, will combine resources with Pride Sports on site to make both operations more efficient and more profitable.

International Woodfuels is making a $20 million investment in Maine and will build a new 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Burnham. The company will introduce a new business model focusing on industrial customers and will supply wood pellets to their clients based on long-term contracts.

"Maine plays a leadership role in expanding renewable energy," Governor Baldacci said. "We have taken great strides this year in showing the world that we are aggressively seeking opportunities to grow our green workforce and invest in clean, renewable energy. International Woodfuels plays an important role in this area, and their entry into the State strengthens our potential to reach our goals of reducing our dependency on fossil fuels, reducing carbon emissions, and increasing the use of sustainable, home-grown energy sources. And in the process, we're growing good paying jobs and our economy."

International Woodfuels searched Northern New England to find a location for its new facility. The company will take advantage of Pine Tree Zone benefits in Maine, one of Governor Baldacci's signature initiatives designed to encourage business expansion and relocation in the State. The program was established in 2003 and is responsible for at least 213 Pine Tree Zone certified businesses throughout the State of Maine.

"Pine Tree Zone businesses have reported their plans to create more than 6,500 jobs and invest nearly $700 million in Maine," the Governor said. "Those jobs alone are expected to generate $203 million in payroll."

Governor Baldacci said that the business climate in Maine has further improved over the past year with the statewide expansion of the Pine Tree Zone program, the repeal of the business equipment tax, and the lowering of the State's income tax rate from 8.5 percent down to 6.5 percent.

"Maine is open for business," Governor Baldacci said. "We are cutting to balance our budget, but we have not lost sight of the investments that need to be made to allow our State to continue to grow. Investments in business are investments in our people. And an investment in Maine people is one of the smartest, most sound investments we can make."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Hannaford Supermarkets for Environmentally Friendly Approach

July 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Hannaford CEO Ron Hodge, local officials and environmental groups to unveil Hannaford's new Platinum-certified LEED supermarket at the site of the former Cony High School. The store is the first supermarket in the country to achieve Platinum LEED certification, the highest standard of the United States Green Building Council.

"This is an impressive facility and it will garner a lot of attention and hopefully be a model to other businesses across the State," Governor Baldacci said. "Not only has the facility used much of the old Cony High School materials, but the store will utilize about half as much energy as a typical supermarket through the use of natural light, new technology and innovative thinking."

Features of the new Augusta supermarket include nearly all freezer and refrigerated cases having doors, saving one-third the energy of cases without doors; a 7,000 square foot roof with a layered system of soil and drought resistant plants to reduce water runoff and help insulate the store; water from geothermal wells to help regulate the building's temperature; and the use of natural daylight six different ways to light the store. The Scarborough-based company says it plans to use the store as a learning laboratory to test new technologies, programs and products that can be leveraged at other Hannaford stores.

Governor Baldacci said that he is proud that Hannaford built the state-of-the-art design in Maine's capitol city because the state has been a leader in energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

"We were one of the first States to use biodiesel to heat State offices; we were one of the first States to adopt the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED building standards for new and renovated State buildings; we are the first State government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources; and this session we passed a comprehensive energy bill that will move Maine forward," the Governor said. "I am proud to see that Hannaford is following the lead of State government and doing more to save energy, save money, and to help save our environment."

The new store, located off Cony Circle in Augusta, is scheduled to open Saturday morning.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Firefighter Workers' Compensation Legislation

July 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 621, An Act Allowing Workers' Compensation Benefits for Firefighters Who Contract Cancer. The legislation was sponsored by Sen. Phil Bartlett (D-Cumberland).

The law in certain situations allows firefighters who contract cancer to be allowed the benefits of workers compensation. The law applies to firefighters who have been employed as such for at least five years, and to retired firefighters who are diagnosed with cancer within 10 years of their last active employment as a firefighter.

"Firefighters have one of the most dangerous professions imaginable," Governor Baldacci said. "They place themselves in harm's way. This bill recognizes that some physical dangers include inhaling carcinogens that may contribute to cancer. The bill makes sense and I am proud to honor our firefighters for their dedication and selflessness in serving all the citizens of Maine."

The ceremonial signing occurred in the Governor's Office with many firefighters, co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation present. The law will take effect on September 12, which is 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

State Files Complaints, Addresses Loggers' Concerns in Northern Maine

July 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said that early investigations by the State of Maine into logging contracting practices has led to a number of actions by the State. Among these actions, one case has already been filed by the Maine Attorney General's Office, and numerous other complaints have been filed by the State with the U.S. Department of Labor. The allegations relate to the federal foreign labor certification program, called H-2A.

"We are actively addressing complaints about illegal business practices that lead to Canadian labor being brought into Maine's woods," said Governor Baldacci. "The global recession has already put a severe strain on the ability for Maine loggers to access employment. We need to ensure that every opportunity is available to them to find work in Maine, and that they are not unlawfully being locked out of jobs in the State."

Earlier this month, Governor Baldacci directed Maine Department of Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman to lead a task force after hearing allegations of potential unlawful or inappropriate activities in the area. The multi-agency task force has been reviewing logging activity in the Northern Maine woods and receiving - and following up on - complaints of unfair hiring practices. In addition to the Department of Labor, the task force includes of the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Conservation, the Maine Revenue Service and the Department of Public Safety.

A team of representatives from the Department of Labor and the Department of Conservation were on site in Aroostook County the week of July 6. They conducted reviews and interviewed loggers and employers. In the weeks since, a Bureau of Labor Standards Wage and Hour inspector has continued site visits to logging employers and job sites to review wage records and look for violations to the Maine proof of ownership law for logging equipment.

In a letter to the Administrator of the Office of Foreign Labor Certification, Commissioner Fortman has requested a federal audit of the H-2A waivers. In her correspondence, the Commissioner documented a number of significant concerns that lead the State to believe that there is a substantial adverse impact upon Maine workers in the logging industry. Among the concerns is that some companies hiring Canadian loggers do not appear to have a permanent physical location in the state. This physical presence is required by a logging company that wishes to obtain foreign labor certification.

"The federal government is taking these allegations very seriously," said Commissioner Fortman. "In some cases, the federal government is temporarily prohibiting new Canadian workers to come into the State while they review the complaints the State has outlined."

"We will continue to collect information and evidence of these allegations and work with our federal partners to ensure that jobs that can and should be filled by Maine workers are available to them," said the Commissioner.

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Governor Baldacci praised local officials and State legislators for their continued support of the State's efforts.

"Maine people should know that there are intense efforts from local, state and federal representatives to address these serious allegations," said the Governor. "While we are making progress, there is much work to be done."

Anyone who has evidence of unfair hiring practices or has a complaint can contact the Maine Department of Labor at 1-888-457-8883 or TTY: 1-800-794-1110.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Baldacci Mourns Passing of Tom Schroth

July 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of Tom Schroth, who served on the Town of Sedgwick Board of Appeals. Schroth, a former newspaper journalist, had covered national conventions for the Brooklyn Eagle in 1948.

"Tom Schroth was a true gentleman," said Governor Baldacci. "He was a father figure to so many in Democratic politics and in his community. Tom had strong values and had earned the respect of those who knew him for the way he expressed these values and lived true to his principles. My prayers are with Tom's wife Pat and all his family at this very difficult time."

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Governor Mourns Passing of Robert H. Reny

July 24, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of Robert H. Reny, founder of Renys. Bob Reny started his first store in 1949 in Damariscotta.

"Bob Reny raised a great family and built a great family business," said Governor Baldacci. "He had an incredible work ethic and treated everyone with great respect."

"I remember my early days serving in the State Legislature, Bob worked the halls of the State House on behalf of Maine businesses," said Governor Baldacci. "He always had a ready smile and an easy laugh, even when we disagreed. Bob worked well with Democrats and Republicans, and always put economic development for Maine first."

"My thoughts and prayers go out to Bob Reny's family, to the employees of Renys, and to the many friends he made over the years," said the Governor.

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Governor Meets with Secretary of Interior

July 25, 2009

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today met with Secretary Ken Salazar of the U.S. Department of Interior and Senator Susan Collins in Bangor. The Secretary is in Maine at the invitation of the Senator to visit Acadia National Park.

"I appreciate the invitation that Senator Collins extended to the Secretary and me to have coffee and conversation this morning," said Governor Baldacci. "The Department has an impact on Maine's efforts to promote conservation, renewable energy, and the sustainability of our natural resources. I look forward to continuing to work with the Maine Congressional Delegation, Secretary Salazar and the Obama Administration on these issues."

The Secretary's tour continues later today to include a boat tour of Acadia National Park.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Members Named to Energy Infrastructure Commission

July 27, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci, Senate President Elizabeth Mitchell and House Speaker Hannah Pingree today announced the appointments to the Commission to Study Energy Infrastructure, which was created by LD 1485, An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future.

"Maine is a leader in the development of renewable sources of energy and has set ambitious goals for reducing our dependency on fossil fuels," Governor Baldacci said. "But we also know that to be successful, we need to appropriately develop transmission infrastructure. Our State has great opportunity, but results are not guaranteed. The members of this commission will help make sure Maine moves forward in the best possible way."

The Commission is charged with examining the feasibility and effects of potential agreements to allow energy transmission systems -- including lines, cables, pipelines and other structures – to be built on State-owned lands, right-of-ways or assets.

"Transmission corridors will play an integral part in moving Maine towards energy sustainability, but we only have one chance to get this right," said President Mitchell. "The members of this Commission possess the expertise necessary to present a comprehensive analysis of what energy corridors will mean for Maine. By better understanding the benefits and potential pit falls of these large scale energy projects we will ensure that Mainers realize the maximum benefit."

The Commission may also consider ways in which the State's electric transmission systems, including new lines, system upgrades or the development of a smart-grid, or the development of natural gas systems, including pipelines and liquefied natural gas terminals, can help the State achieve its energy goals.

"It is vital that we utilize Maine's energy resources in a smart and efficient manner. Energy corridors offer the opportunity to keep Maine at the forefront of sustainable energy development. The members of the commission will ensure that we live up to that potential," said Speaker Pingree.

The Commission has 13 members, including three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate; five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House; and five members appointed by the Governor. The first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named House member is the House chair.

The members are:

Rep. John Martin, Eagle Lake (House Chair); Rep. Sharon Treat, Hallowell; Rep. Jon Hinck, Portland; Rep. Ken Fletcher, Winslow; and Rep. Stacey Fitts, Pittsfield.

Senator Barry Hobbins, York (Senate Chair); Sen. Seth Goodall, Sagadahoc; and Sen. Peter Mills, Somerset.

Karin Tilberg, Senior Policy Adviser to Governor Baldacci on Energy and Natural Resources; Jack Cashman, Commissioner, Maine Public Utilities Commission; Sam Collins, S.W. Collins Company; Chris Gardner, Washington County Commissioner; and Keith Van Scotter, President and CEO of Lincoln Paper.

The Commission must submit a report no later than December 2, 2009, that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation for the 2nd Regular Session of the 124th Legislature. The Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy may submit a bill related to subject matter of the report.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Federal Government to Audit Companies in Northern Maine

July 27, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned that the U.S. Department of Labor will be auditing more than two dozen companies applying for foreign labor certification (H-2A visas) from the federal agency. He said that he is pleased that the United States Department of Labor is addressing the State's concerns regarding logging contracting practices that may be unfairly limiting hiring of Maine loggers in favor of Canadian labor.

"I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Labor is acting swiftly to address concerns that the community, State and Maine Congressional Delegation have registered about alleged illegal business practices by some logging companies," said Governor Baldacci. "We must be vigilant in ensuring that jobs in Maine are able to be accessed by Maine workers first. My Administration has found a number of potential issues that both we and the federal government are going to continue to investigate."

"I appreciate Maine's Congressional Delegation for their attention and assistance on this issue," said the Governor.

Maine Department of Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman requested the U.S. Department of Labor to take a closer look at some companies that do not appear to have a permanent physical location in the state and that are hiring Canadian loggers. This physical presence is required by a logging company that wishes to obtain foreign labor certification. Companies that are not in compliance with the laws governing the Foreign Labor Certification process face possible penalties. The Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification wants companies utilizing the H-2A temporary agricultural program to fully understand the program's requirements and responsibilities. Information is available at the following web site http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/

The businesses will have 21 days to respond to the request for certain information and then a team from the federal agency will conduct the necessary review of documentation. Companies found to be in non-compliance face possible penalties including revoking their labor certification and debarment for up to three years from the program, meaning the companies could not hire H-2A foreign workers for that amount of time.

In addition to action taken by the federal agency, the Maine Department of Labor will be initiating procedures for discontinuation of services to two employers. Discontinuation of services would result in excluding those employers from access to the state job bank. Posting jobs on the state job bank is a requirement prior to bringing in foreign workers pursuant to regulations governing the H-2A program.

Anyone who has evidence of unfair hiring practices or has a complaint is encouraged to contact the Maine Department of Labor at 1-888-457-8883 or TTY: 1-800-794-1110.

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Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Educational Bill for Military Children

July 28, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1324, An Act To Adopt the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

The intent of the interstate compact is to help ensure that children of military families have seamless transfers from school to school.

"Reassignments in the military present special challenges to the children of a service member," Governor Baldacci said. "They not only have to make new friends and get used to new surroundings, but they have to transition to new schools. This will help with some of the challenges, including credit transfers, meeting graduation requirements, and missed entrance or exit exams. This law makes sense because every child deserves the opportunity to flourish."

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremonial signing by bill sponsor Rep. Jarrod Crockett (R-Bethel) and supporters of the legislation.

The law goes into effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session, which is September 12.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Praises Early Approval of Truck Weight Limit Pilot

July 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said he was pleased with early Congressional support for a one-year pilot program authored by Senator Susan Collins that will exempt Maine's Interstate highway system from the current federal truck weight limit. The Senate Appropriations Committee's Transportation Subcommittee today included the Collins proposal in the Fiscal Year 2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations legislation.

Surrounding states and Canadian provinces have weight restrictions of 99,000 to 107,000 pounds in some cases on the Interstate and Trans-Canada Highway systems. Currently, federal law prohibits trucks weighing more than 80,000 pounds on all Interstate highways in Maine with the exception of the Maine Turnpike and that portion of I-95 between the Turnpike and the New Hampshire state line. The State has long been concerned about the diversion of heavy trucks to smaller state and local roads, which impact safety, the economy and the environment.

"I applaud Senator Collins and the entire Maine Congressional delegation for their strong support of addressing the federal truck weight restrictions that have for many years significantly hampered the ability of Maine businesses to compete regionally," said Governor Baldacci. "Allowing loads to move from 80,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds on Maine's Interstate will reduce the number of trucks on the road, thereby increasing safety, while reducing net fuel consumption. Importantly, the exemption will also reduce transportation costs, improving economic productivity of Maine industry."

The Governor and the entire Maine Congressional delegation have long supported changing federal law in order to raise the weight limit for six-axle trucks to 100,000 pounds on the Interstate highway system in Maine.

"I urge the full Senate Appropriations Committee and Congress to support the pilot program proposed by Senator Collins so that we can show that increasing the truck weight limits make sense for Maine's economy, environment and transportation safety," said the Governor. "This is a great opportunity for Maine at a critical time in our economy."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Orders Flag Flown at Half-Staff in Newcastle and Damariscotta on July 30

July 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ordered that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Thursday, July 30, in the towns of Newcastle and Damariscotta in remembrance of Robert H. Reny, founder of Renys. The company is headquartered in Newcastle and the first store was opened in Damariscotta in 1949. In addition, the Governor has directed flags at all 14 Renys stores to be flown at half-staff on Thursday.

The funeral for Mr. Reny is scheduled for Thursday, July 30, in Newcastle.

State of Maine
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President Approves Public Assistance for Eight Counties

July 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that President Obama has signed a disaster declaration for eight Maine counties for heavy rain, hail, damaging winds, flooding, erosion and landslides that struck the State between June 18 and July 8. Counties designated were Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and Washington.

Governor Baldacci sought the declaration, which will provide federal support to repair damaged public infrastructure in the counties, on July 14. The granting of Public Assistance enables the State and affected local governments to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for 75 percent of the cost of repairing roads, bridges and other public property. The declaration also makes all counties in the State eligible to apply for assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

"Maine suffered significant damage, caused by a month of heavy rains, erosion and landslides," Governor Baldacci said. "Many communities have faced significant hardships as they have worked to make repairs. The federal assistance granted today will help them rebuild."

In the Governor's letter requesting federal assistance, damage in the eight counties was estimated at more than $2.5 million.

"State and local budgets, already adversely affected by a nationwide recession have been exhausted by the convergent effects of seven major disasters since May of 2006. Several communities tell us they have verified damages well above their entire road maintenance budget," Governor Baldacci wrote in his letter to FEMA.

A Federal-state team has also found significant damage in Piscataquis County. The Governor plans to request that Piscataquis be added to the list of Counties eligible for assistance.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Maine Ramps Up Effort to Prepare for H1N1 Vaccination

July 31, 2009

AUGUSTA – At the direction of Governor John E. Baldacci, State agencies today announced a plan to assist schools and communities prepare for the likely resurgence of H1NI influenza (swine flu) this fall.

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention/Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine Emergency Management Agency and the Maine Department of Education are sponsoring the Maine H1N1 Preparedness Summit on Thursday, August 20, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Augusta Civic Center. The goal of the Summit is to help Maine prepared for the fall and to plan for a statewide H1N1 vaccination campaign.

"This is an important opportunity to prepare for the fall when schools across the state will open," said Governor Baldacci. "Parents, students, educators and health care professionals need to know that through coordination and planning, we are better able to mitigate the impact of H1N1."

Currently, 302 confirmed and probable cases of H1N1 have been identified in Maine. Since tests are no longer being conducted on all of those who have these symptoms, the actual number of people affected by H1N1 is much higher.

"The U.S. CDC and the World Health Organization are no longer providing case numbers, because actual cases are much higher,'' said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of the MeCDC. "It's important to understand that H1N1 will most likely increase when students return to school, whether it's a public institution or a residential school. Respiratory etiquette, like covering coughs and sneezes, frequent hand-washing and staying home when ill can help contain the spread of the virus. We must also prepare for a statewide effort to offer Mainers the anticipated H1N1 vaccine."

The Summit will be kicked off by Governor Baldacci and will feature an overview of H1N1, along with breakout sessions geared to healthcare providers, emergency management professionals, public health officials, schools and other community leaders.

"We have seen throughout this summer how Maine's preparation for a public health emergency like H1N1 has been invaluable,'' said Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Brenda Harvey. "We must remain vigilant and maintain a sense of shared responsibility to reduce the effects of H1N1 this fall and beyond."

Maine CDC and the Department of Education are coordinating school prevention efforts, which will likely begin with large-scale vaccination against the seasonal flu. The U.S. CDC's Advisory Committee on Best Practices has recommended that all children ages 6 months to 18 years be vaccinated and that efforts should begin as soon as the vaccine is available.

"The summit provides an opportunity for our community and school partners to begin preparation for H1N1 vaccination when it becomes available," said Department of Education Commissioner Susan Gendron. "Our school nurses are the first line of defense in our schools and a critical partner."

Registration for the Summit has been brisk, with more than 600 attendees registered. It costs $15 to register, but scholarships are available by request. To register by phone, please call 207-622-7566, ext. 232, or contact MCD Meeting Services at conferences@mcd.org

State of Maine
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Governor Baldacci Calls Attention to Asian Longhorned Beetle

August 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Maine Department of Conservation, United States Forest Service and Maine Forest Service to kick off an education campaign about the Asian Longhorned Beetle.

The Asian Longhorned Beetle attacks hardwood trees such as maple, birch, ash, poplar, willow, elm, horse chestnut and others. Damage caused by the beetle would impact hardwood lumber production, maple syrup production, landscape plants, tourism, street trees and more.

The beetle was first found in New York in 1996 and has since been found in other states, including Illinois, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Governor Baldacci said that Mainers should be on the lookout for Asian Longhorned Beetles, and contact the proper authorities if one is found.

"The Asian Longhorned Beetle poses a significant threat to our forests and our agricultural economy," Governor Baldacci said. "The pest may be spread through firewood, infested nursery stock, and other wood products such as logs and pallets. Most invasive insects are found by the general public, not by experts, so it is important to make people aware of the threat."

For more information on the Asian Longhorned Beetle in Maine, or how to issue a report, visit http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pi/pestsurvey/pestinfo/ALB.htm

To help create awareness, Governor Baldacci also issued a proclamation naming August, 2009 as Asian Longhorned Beetle Awareness Month in the State of Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, Maine has 17 million acres of forested land and half is comprised of hardwood trees that enhance the state's air and water quality, natural landscapes, recreational destinations, wildlife habitats, property values, and the forest and agricultural economy through timber harvesting, maple syrup production and landscape tree sales; and

WHEREAS, many of the trees that beautify urban streets are hardwood trees. These trees help residents reduce heating and cooling costs by shielding homes from the harsh heat of summer and bitter cold of winter, and reduce air pollution and carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, in August 2008, the Asian longhorned beetle, a destructive non-native invasive beetle, was discovered to be destroying hardwood trees in Worcester, MA, and had previously been found in New York,, Illinois and New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Asian longhorned beetle has already killed tens of thousands of hardwood trees in these four states, and damage may reach into the billions of dollars if the beetle is not eradicated; and

WHEREAS, efforts undertaken in Maine as well as in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont in partnership with private and nonprofit

organizations, universities, and local, state and federal government, are helping to protect the billions of threatened hardwood trees in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Maine has been proactive in preventing the introduction of the Asian longhorned beetle, through outreach, education and surveys; and

WHEREAS, all Mainers have a responsibility to stop the introduction of the Asian longhorned beetle by remaining vigilant; halting transport of firewood, nursery trees, or logs from quarantined areas; and increasing their understanding and awareness of the Asian longhorned beetle and its severe potential impacts on the environment and economy,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of August, 2009 as

ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

State of Maine
StateDocs
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Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff in Milo and Brownville Junction

August 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the passing of a member of the Maine National Guard, Sgt. Dean Rouse of Brownville Junction. Sgt. Rouse died Thursday. He had been deployed to Iraq with Detachment 1, 169th Military Police Company in 2007. Sgt. Rouse had been serving with the 488th Military Police Company at the time of his death.

Sgt. Rouse had been a resident of Brownville, and his memorial service will be held on Tuesday in Milo.

In remembrance and honor of Sergeant Dean Rouse, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2009, in the towns of Milo and Brownville Junction.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Welcomes First Class of Medical Education Program

August 3, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Maine Medical Center to welcome the first class of the new Maine Medical Center and Tufts University School of Medicine Undergraduate Medical Education Program. A ceremony was held at the Dana Center Auditorium on the Maine Medical Center campus to mark the beginning of the program.

"Collaboration, such as that between Maine Medical Center and Tufts University, and the work that the Legislature, the Executive Branch and individuals from Maine Medical Center, MaineHealth and others did to get this program off the ground is indicative of what Maine is all about: identifying a problem and working together to find the most effective and efficient solution," Governor Baldacci said. "This program will go a long way toward addressing Maine's physician shortage, and it does so by embracing public/private partnerships that build upon Maine's strengths and finds efficient solutions to address our challenges."

In addition to the induction of the first medical school class, the inaugural Victor A. McKusick Lecture was given by Dr. Diana W. Bianchi of the Tufts University School of Medicine. The lecture, titled "What I learned from Victor McKusick that I Use Every Day" was delivered to the group, including members of Dr. McKusick's family, local officials and students.

Dr. Victor McKusick was an internist and medical geneticist who was born and raised in Parkman, Maine. Dr. McKusick went on to become a Professor of Medical Genetics and Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md., and was the original author of Mendelian Inheritance in Man. Dr. McKusick studied at Tufts University from 1940 – 1943 and earned an honorary doctorate degree from the school in 1994.

Of the 36 students in the first class, 20 are from Maine, which Governor Baldacci says will benefit the State for years to come.

"Research shows that doctors tend to settle near the hospitals where they complete their training," the Governor said. "I know that given the chance, young doctors will stay in Maine."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Nominations

August 4, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the nomination of five people to the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services. He also announced one appointment to the Maine Human Rights Commission.

To the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services, the Governor has nominated Marvin Glazier, of Bangor; Kimberly Moody, of Poland; Ronald Schneider Jr., of Wells; Kenneth Spirer or Portland; and Sally Sutton, of South Portland.

To the Maine Human Rights Commission, the Governor has nominated Ms. A. Mavourneen Thompson, of Peaks Island.

The Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services was created by legislation this year. The independent commission will be responsible for the financing and operation of indigent services. The commission will also have the ability to recommend ways to improve the quality of those services.

Marvin Glazier has served as an attorney at Vafiades, Brountas & Kominsky, LLP in Bangor for 40 years. He has handled court appointed counsel work in State and Federal courts. Glazier is a graduate of the University of Maine and Boston University School of Law.

Kimberly Moody is the Executive Director of the Disability Rights Center. She has worked at the Center for 23 years. She currently serves on the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. Moody earned an undergraduate degree from Wheaton College.

Ronald Schneider Jr. has been an attorney at Bernstein Shur for 10 years, concentrating on employment, health and criminal law. He was a member of the Maine Indigent Legal Services Clifford Commission. Schneider is a graduate of Bates College and the University of Maine School of Law.

Kenneth Spirer retired in 2001 as First Vice President and Assistant General Counsel at Merrill Lynch & Co. Spirer was also previously employed at the United States Securities & Exchange Commission. He has been a board member of the Maine Community Foundation since 2000. Spirer holds an undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University, a J.D. from New York University School of Law and a M.B.A. from City University of New York.

Sally Sutton has served as a Senior Policy Analyst at the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service since 2005. Prior to that, she was Executive Coordinator of Justice Action Group for three years. She was Executive Director of the Maine Civil Liberties Union for 18 years. Sutton earned an undergraduate degree from Wheaton College and a Master from the University of Wisconsin.

Ms. A. Mavourneen Thompson has been self-employed for six years, and is the current principal and co-owner of Thompson Price Research Group Inc. She served six years at the Maine Education Policy Research Institute at the University of Southern Maine, and was a teacher at Portland High School for 15

years. Thompson served in the Maine House of Representatives from 1980 to 1984. She earned an undergraduate degree from Eastern Baptist College in St. David's, PA, and a Masters in Education from the University of Maine.

Nominees to the two commissions must be reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the full Senate. A Senate confirmation session is scheduled for Aug. 24.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

U.S. Postal Service Issues Maine Stamp

August 6, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today hosted a ceremony marking the introduction for sale of the Flags of Our Nation Maine stamp. The depiction of the Maine State Flag along with a representation of some of Maine's treasured natural resources is available now as part of a set with nine other states' stamps.

The Governor praised the design of the stamp, which highlights some of Maine's most important attributes.

"When people come to Maine they enjoy the clean air and clean water, and get to know the wonderful people who call Maine home," said Governor Baldacci. "We're proud of our people, including the nearly 4,000 employees of the Postal Service in Maine. Their hard work is important to all our communities."

For more information about the Maine stamp, please visit www.usps.com

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

State Agencies Closed Friday

August 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reminded the public that many Maine State government offices are closed on Friday, Aug. 7, 2009, as a cost saving initiative for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Biennial State Budget.

"Please plan ahead for any services you may need from State agencies during this and the other State government shutdown days," said Governor Baldacci. "When scheduling the days, every effort has been made to reduce the impact to Maine people, businesses and communities."

The public is encouraged to check with a specific agency before seeking State services on Friday, Aug. 7, 2009.

The reference to the State closures is Public Law 2009, Chap. 213, Part SSS: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chapters/PUBLIC213-PtCtoEnd.asp

This is the second of 10 closure days between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. The other dates that State agencies and offices will be closed are as follows:

Friday, September 4, 2009

Friday, October 9, 2009

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Friday, January 15, 2010

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Friday, March 12, 2010

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Friday, May 28, 2010

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Announces Nominations to Ethics, Liquor Commission and Gambling Board

August 6, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced nominations to one board and two commissions.

The Governor has nominated Andre Duchette, of Brunswick, to the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. Duchette's name was submitted by the Maine Senate President.

To the Gambling Control Board, the Governor has renominated Peter Danton, of Saco, and Cushing Samp, of Saco.

Peter Danton has also been renominated to the Liquor and Lottery Commission.

Andre Duchette is employed as an attorney at Taylor, McCormack & Frame, LLC. He focuses on real estate and business transactions, trusts and probate, and landlord/tenant matters. Duchette is a graduate of Middlebury College and the University of Maine School of Law.

Peter Danton retired in 1989 as Deputy Secretary of State. He had served from 1985 to 1987 as the Chief of Staff to Governor Joseph Brennan. Danton served seven terms in the Maine State Senate, from 1971 to 1986. He is a graduate of the University of Maine.

Cushing Samp is retired. Under contract at Pine Tree Legal Assistance from 1997 to 2005, she had served as the editor of the Wabanaki Legal News. She was an attorney-examiner with the Maine Public Utilities Commission from 1978 to 1984. Samp is a graduate of Brown University and the University of Maine School of Law.

Nominees to the board and commissions must be reviewed by the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee and confirmed by the full Senate. A Senate confirmation session is scheduled for Aug. 24.

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Governor Announces Nominations to Community College and Maine Maritime Boards

August 10, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced nominations to the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy Board of Trustees.

Governor Baldacci nominated Devin Beliveau, of Kittery, and renominated Doris Belisle-Bonneau, of Auburn, and Merle Nelson, of Falmouth, to the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees.

The Governor has nominated Rodney Rodrigue, of Longwood, Fla., and renominated Victoria Larson, of Windham, and Robert Peacock II, of Eastport, to the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy.

Devin Beliveau is an educator at Thornton Academy. He is a part-time columnist of the Weekly Sentinel. Beliveau is a graduate of Colby College.

Doris Belisle-Bonneau has worked in the education field for 37 years and is the curriculum coordinator for the newly consolidated RSU No. 10. She served as curriculum coordinator for five years with MSAD No. 39. Belisle-Bonneau also has been an educational consultant since 2003. She earned a Bachelors degree, a Masters in teaching and Certificate of Advanced Studies from the University of Maine.

Merle Nelson has been serving as a court mediator for Cumberland and York District Courts for more than eight years. She is a former state representative, having represented Portland from 1976 to 1986. Nelson earned an undergraduate degree from Lesley College in Cambridge, Mass., and a master's in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

For more than 10 years, Rodney Rodrigue has been president and CEO of Time Wise Management Systems, a management consulting company, and president of Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership. He also established - and currently serves as chair of - Ironwood, a residential treatment center that helps teens and families in crisis. Rodrigue is a graduate of the Maine Maritime Academy and earned a M.B.A. from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Victoria Larson has been employed as a vice president of TD Bank in Lewiston since 2000. She worked for Maine Medical Center from 1997 to 1998. Larson retired from the U.S. Naval Reserves in 1998, last serving as Director of Plans and Programs, Training, Medical and Financial Systems at the Naval Reserve Headquarters in New Orleans, La. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Arizona and a M.S. from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

Robert Peacock is presently employed by the R.J. Peacock Canning Company and Quoddy Pilots USA. He has also served as a consultant for the maritime, fishing, aquaculture and food processing industries. Peacock is a retired captain in the U.S. Naval Reserves. He is a graduate of the Maine Maritime Academy.

Nominees to the boards must be reviewed by the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee and confirmed by the full Senate. A Senate confirmation session is scheduled for Aug. 24.

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Governor Announces Nominations to Labor Relations and Public Employees Retirement System Boards

August 11, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced nominations to the Board of Trustees of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System and the Maine Labor Relations Board.

Governor Baldacci nominated Dimitri Balatsos, of Falmouth, and renominated Benedetto Viola, of Scarborough, and Kenneth Williams, of Damariscotta, to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees.

To the Maine Labor Relations Board, the Governor has nominated David Elliott, of Whitefield, and renominated Carol Bankart Gilmore, of Charleston, and Wayne Whitney, of Brunswick. Gilmore and Whitney are filling employee seats (Gilmore as primary and Whitney as alternate) and Elliot is filling a public seat as an alternate.

Dimitri Balatsos is the president and CIO of Tesseract Partners, a global investment company he founded 13 years ago. Balatsos earned an undergraduate degree from Knox College in Galesburg, Ill.; a master's from University of California at Berkeley, Calif.; and completed doctoral coursework in economics at New York University.

Benedetto Viola has served 24 years as an engineer with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. He received an undergraduate degree from the University of Maine and master's from Husson University.

Kenneth Williams has been an educator at Nobleboro Central School for 25 years. Williams received a bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware and a master's from State University of New York at Stony Brook.

David Elliott currently works as an independent hearing officer with the Maine Public Employees Retirement System. He was a lecturer at Bates College from 2006 to 2008. Elliott served at the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis with the Maine Legislature from 1981 to 2005, serving as Director for the last three years. He is a graduate of Colby College and Boston University School of Law.

Carol Bankart Gilmore is a professor of management at the University of Maine. She received a bachelor's from Connecticut College; a master's in education from Keene State College; and from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a master's in labor studies and a Ph.D in business administration.

Wayne Whitney is an attorney at McTeague, Higbee, Case, Cohen, Whitney & Toker, where he specializes in workers' compensation cases. Whitney is a graduate of Duke University and Georgetown University Law Center.

Nominees to the boards must be reviewed by the Labor Committee and confirmed by the full Senate. A Senate confirmation session is scheduled for Aug. 24.

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Governor Meets with President Obama

August 11, 2009

PORTSMOUTH, NH - Governor John E. Baldacci today met with President Barack Obama and attended the President's health care Town Hall event at Portsmouth High School. The Governor greeted the President at the high school and reinforced in a brief conversation his support for the President's efforts to enact national health care reform.

"Maine has led the way in addressing health reform, and we know that workable solutions at the national level are needed more than ever to address the out of control costs of health care," said Governor Baldacci. "The status quo is unacceptable and dangerous to our families, our economy and our communities. Hard working families without insurance are an illness away from bankruptcy, businesses are being forced to drop coverage for valued employees, and those with insurance know that they are one pink slip away from losing coverage."

"We can improve the quality and access of health care that every American deserves and we must do so in a way that contains health care costs," Governor Baldacci said. "President Obama is providing extensive leadership, and we must take this important opportunity. Americans must work together to find a path that addresses our health care concerns. Nothing is more personal to people than their own health and the health of their family."

The Governor first action when taking office in 2003 was to take the steps to pass Dirigo Health Reform, a comprehensive initiative addressing access to affordable, quality health care.

Maine has been recognized as a leader in tackling many of the issues being debated nationally, including expanding affordable health insurance options, expanding best practices, promoting prevention efforts, enacting consumer protections. The Governor and Maine State Legislature have been working to improve Dirigo Health Reform. This year, the Maine Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, initiatives to improve public health, reduce medical errors, reduce infections in hospital settings, establish medical school scholarships, enhance telemedicine services and to improve health care transparency.

The Governor joined a conference call last Thursday that included Senator Olympia Snowe, other members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, and other governors who are interested in finding a balance between various proposals that will lead to substantial and sustainable health care reform.

"Maine's experience shows that while health care reform is hard work, it is vital that all of us come together and commit ourselves to finding common ground," said Governor Baldacci. "We all want hard working families and businesses to prosper and thrive, and that simply is not possible without having access to health care that is affordable and of high quality."

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Animal Welfare Bill

August 12, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 454, An Act To Expand Representation on the Animal Welfare Advisory Council.

Bill sponsor Sen. Richard Nass (R-York) was at the ceremonial signing, as were the First Lady and the First Family's dogs, Sam and Mia. In addition, members of the Federation of Maine Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners, supporters of the bill, were represented at the event.

The legislation expands the composition of the Animal Welfare Advisory Council to include a kennel license holder. It requires the Governor, in making this nomination, to consider a list made by State-based dog clubs. The bill also ensures that a pet owner sits on the board, as well as a person representing licensed breeding kennels.

"This is one of many pieces of legislation passed this session to address animal welfare issues, something that is important to all Mainers," said the Governor. "As a dog owner, I am pleased to sign this bill into law."

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session, which is Sept. 12.

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Governor Applauds New Affordable Housing Units in Portland

August 12, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in the grand opening of 53 Danforth, an innovative affordable and workforce housing apartment building in downtown Portland. Thirty of the 43 housing units are set aside for low-income renters.

The Governor highlighted the public-private collaboration that included developers, financiers and local, state and federal governments.

"This building will provide homes for hard-working individuals and families right here in the heart of the community center," said Governor Baldacci. "Danforth is also a great example of smart growth and downtown revitalization. Sighting new construction such as this housing in places with existing infrastructure reduces sprawl and decreases the costs to construct and maintain the building. And energy efficiency standards employed here will help reduce energy costs and provide a better environment for all."

"53 Danforth is an exciting project," said the Governor. "I'm pleased that MaineHousing provided a significant portion of its financing, including a $2 million tax credit, $1.65 million subsidy and $3 million loan."

The Governor was joined today by Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, Portland Mayor Jill Duson and MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick, as well as Wright-Ryan Construction, TD Banknorth and developers Bobby Monks and Nathan Szanton.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Corrections System Legislation

August 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1224, "An Act Regarding the Operation of County Jails and the State Board of Corrections." The bill streamlines many programs and services offered by the county jails and the Department of Corrections.

"This bill includes a number of recommendations made by the Board of Corrections," said Governor Baldacci. "These are important improvements to the operations of Maine's correctional system."

The bill expands victim notification requirements, updates and modernizes the county jails' home release program provisions and clarifies provisions of the Board's budget review process.

"We all know that there have been challenges in implementing changes to the Maine Correctional system, but we are seeing progress," said Governor Baldacci. "Jails are now working together as a system and the taxpayers are the beneficiaries. It comes down to high quality services, increased efficiencies, and working together to make this all possible. This bill represents another important step on the road of positive change."

The Board of Corrections approved county jail budgets last week, and the jails only grew at 0.9 percent for FY10, compared with 9 percent in past years. Three jails have undergone major mission changes in less than a year since the Board has been operating.

Joining the Governor at the signing ceremony was the bill sponsor, Rep. Patsy Crockett (D-Augusta), George Jabar, Commissioner of Kennebec County and member of the Maine Board of Corrections and other supporters.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session, which is Sept. 12.

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Governor Meets with U.S. Transportation Secretary

August 17, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today met with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Congressman Mike Michaud at the Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center at the University of Maine. The Secretary was invited by Congressman Michaud to tour the facility and learn about the cutting edge technology that has applications for transportation use.

"I appreciate that Secretary LaHood has come to Maine to see this impressive facility," said Governor Baldacci. "He is seeing first-hand the investments that Maine has made in technology that is meeting demands of a new era, and creating opportunity for Maine now and into the future. The real-world application of composite technology developed at the University of Maine is benefiting our infrastructure and our economy."

The Composites Center highlighted its "Bridge-in-a-Back-Pack," which uses an inflatable composite arch design. Dr. Habib Dagher gave a tour of the Center and talked about the potential of the technology for additional transportation projects. The Neal Bridge in Pittsfield was built with this technology earlier this year.

Previous R&D bonds were approved by Maine voters that have supported the Maine Advanced Engineering Wood Composites Center. In addition, a 2008 law initiated by the Baldacci Administration included the commitment to expand composite technologies while improving bridge safety.

Secretary LaHood said that he was impressed with the innovation at the Center and would take what he learned today back to the Obama Administration's "green cabinet," a smaller group of the full cabinet that focuses on energy and transportation issues.

The Secretary also noted Maine's leadership in getting federal Recovery Act funds to work in the State. Maine was the first in the nation to obligate 100 percent of its federal Recovery Act highway funds, and has spent 34 percent of these funds, putting Maine people to work and improving Maine's infrastructure.

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Maine Revenue Services to Hold Sales Tax Seminars

August 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Maine Revenue Services will host sales tax seminars across the State from Aug. 31 through Oct. 22.

The seminars will review changes affecting sales, use and service provider taxes that were included in the tax reform legislation passed this year by the Legislature. The changes are scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2010.

"Maine Revenue Services is committed to providing accessible and affordable educational opportunities to as many taxpayers as possible," said Peter B. Beaulieu, Director of the Sales, Fuel and Special Tax Division of MRS.

Seminars will be provided twice daily from 1 p.m. to 4 pm and again from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at 23 locations from St. Agatha to Wells. These free events are aimed at educating retailers in the proper administration of the taxes, but the general public is also welcomed.

For a list of seminar locations, go to Maine Revenue's homepage at www.maine.gov/revenue and click on "2009 Sales Tax seminars."

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"Read With ME." Celebrates 10th Year

August 18, 2009

Provides Free Books to Maine Kindergartners

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci today joined more than 100 volunteers for the annual book bag-assembling project for the literacy outreach program Read With ME. Together, they prepared 18,500 book bags to be distributed to incoming kindergarten students in more than 400 schools throughout Maine, as well as participating homeschoolers. Students at schools that participate will receive book bags – at no cost – after school opens in September.

For the first time, a video of the First Lady reading from the book with the words captioned at the bottom will be put on the Web site of Maine Reads so that children may read along with the First Lady.

"This added interactive feature shows that while technology may have changed, one thing that hasn't is that books are among the most important tools to a child's development," said Governor Baldacci. "Education and literacy are keys to our State's future."

The Governor and the First Lady were joined by Maine author and illustrator Holly Meade, of Sedgwick. Meade is the author and illustrator of this year's featured book, A Place to Sleep.

A Place to Sleep has been specially designed and reissued for Read With ME. to include activities for young readers. Each book bag also includes literacy information and a bookmark developed by the Maine Department of Education and illustrated by Meade. School libraries will be provided with DVDs produced by FairPoint Communications in collaboration with Maine Public Broadcasting. These DVD's offer tips about reading aloud.

The Governor and the First Lady recognized FairPoint Communications, the underwriter of the Read With ME. Program. Pam Joy, Vice President of Community Affairs for FairPoint Communications, participated in the Augusta Armory event today. FairPoint technicians and members of the Army National Guard are among the volunteers delivering books to the schools.

This year marks the 10th year of Read With ME. The First Lady, a former kindergarten teacher, spearheads Maine Reads, the umbrella organization for Read With ME. Each year the featured book is selected by a committee of educators, parents, teachers, librarians, literacy professionals and authors.

"Countless children have benefited by 10 years of Read With ME. as the books make the rounds within families and through friends. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of FairPoint Communications, which makes it all possible," said the First Lady.

For more information about Read With ME., visit www.mainereads.org

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Governor Urges Vigilance, Collaboration to Reduce the Impact of H1N1 this Fall

August 20, 2009

More Than 1,350 Attend Maine H1N1 Summit in Augusta

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci praised community leaders, educators, public health officials, health care workers and first responders for their commitment to preparing for the likely increase of H1N1 (swine flu) this fall, as he opened Maine's H1N1 Summit at the Augusta Civic Center Thursday.

"This is going to take all of us, working together, to meet the challenges ahead,'' Baldacci said. "We may end up averting a crisis. That is our hope and we are hoping for the best. But we also know we must prepare for the worst. A collaborative effort is essential to our success."

This spring, the Governor convened the H1N1 Response Committee, consisting of representatives of several state agencies, including those from health and human services, public safety, education and emergency management. The Summit was another step to build on Maine's early collaborative success in containing the impact of H1N1. This effort was strengthened Tuesday, when Maine's four largest health insurers agreed to cover H1N1 vaccination for their policyholders.

"This is another example that shows that if we all work together in a thoughtful, responsible way, we can overcome the difficulties associated with this unusual flu,'' Baldacci said.

The day-long Summit provided the latest information on H1N1, offered vaccine administration refresher training for healthcare providers and hosted a town hall 'question and answer' session. In the afternoon breakout sessions, table top exercises were held by region of the state to plan for the fall H1N1 vaccine campaign.

"With school reconvening across Maine and with an expected escalation of H1N1, we thought this was the perfect time to bring stakeholders together so we can all learn from each other what we can do to assure Maine successfully addresses H1N1 as well as offers the vaccine when it arrives in October," said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine CDC in the Department of Health and Human Services.

More information on the Summit, including answers to the most frequently asked questions can be found later today at the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention's web site: www.maineflu.gov.

All Mainers are reminded that they can take everyday actions to prevent H1N1 and to stay healthy:

• Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.

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• Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

• Stay home if you get sick.

• Stay informed by checking the Maine CDC web site, www.mainepublichealth.gov

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Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on Monday, Aug. 24

August 21, 2009

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Bernard, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Monday, Aug. 24, 2009.

According to the Department of Defense, Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Bernard, of New Portland died Aug. 14 while serving in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

Lance Cpl. Bernard was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

A funeral service for Lance Cpl. Bernard is planned for 10 a.m., Monday, Aug. 24 at the Crossroads Bible Church in Madison.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Mixed Martial Arts Bill

August 31, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1089, "An Act To Regulate Mixed Martial Arts Competitions, Exhibitions and Events." The bill creates the Mixed Martial Arts Authority of Maine to regulate and promote mixed martial arts competitions, exhibitions and events.

"I understand that mixed martial arts competitions have attracted a broad following, including many people in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "From the perspective of the State, the most important part of this new law is to guarantee that we have the rules and oversight necessary to protect participates and fans. I believe the structure established by this legislation does that."

The legislation sets a deadline of March 1, 2010, for rules to be established for competition and to protect the health and safety of competitors. Events may begin on March 1, 2010, as long as those rules are adopted by that date.

At the event were sponsors and cosponsors of the bill as well as Mike Brown, a Maine native who is the current World Extreme Cagefighting featherweight champion.

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Governor Ceremonially Signs Long-Term Care Bill

August 31, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1078, "An Act To Strengthen Sustainable Long-term Supportive Services for Maine Citizens." The bill is intended to make Maine's system of long-term services more responsive to consumers and more sustainable during these difficult times.

"This legislation focuses on finding ways to make services more flexible, while reducing redundancy," said Governor Baldacci. "Work is already underway, lead by the Department of Health and Human Services, to improve the State's long-term care system with the goal of making it more transparent, more portable, more responsive, and more cost effective. As we work to make our system stronger, we want to maximize independence and choice for seniors."

The Governor also recognized the critical role direct care workers play in making sure adults with long-term care needs receive support.

The bill goes into effect 90 days after the close of the Legislative session, which is Sept. 12.

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Governor Signs Civil Emergency Order to Fight Flu, Facilitate School-Based Vaccinations

September 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent to allow the State to better respond to the potential dangers of H1N1 flu and to facilitate a statewide vaccination campaign.

"Maine has been proactive in its response to this new flu," Governor Baldacci said. "But as the school year begins, we must continue our vigilance, which will require a responsible and aggressive vaccination and public education campaign. It's our goal that every person in the State has access to vaccines for the seasonal and H1N1 flu."

Many school districts reported that a concern about potential liability was putting at risk their ability to participate in vaccination clinics. The proclamation protects school districts and other vaccination clinic participants from liability.

The Proclamation also will provide immunity from tort liability for approved health care workers who administer the flu vaccines.

The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of school supported vaccine clinics for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

"While the vaccines are voluntary and the final decision is left to parents, it's important that as many schools as possible participate so that every child in the State has access to this important preventative treatment," Governor Baldacci said. "We know that controlling the spread of the flu in schools is one of the most effective ways to slow the disease."

On June 11, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of H1N1. Since its initial detection in March, the virus has spread through 53 American states and territories and more than 200 countries. In June, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius made a PREP Act emergency declaration (Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act), granting immunity from tort liability in regards to H1N1 vaccines. In July, Secretary Sebelius renewed a determination that a public health emergency exists nationwide.

On April 29, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order that activated the State's H1N1 Response Committee, which includes the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, MEMA, the Department of Education and the Governor's Office.

The text of the proclamation follows:

Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent

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Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Maine, and pursuant to the relevant provisions of 37-B M.R.S.A. §§ 703, 741, 742, 784-A and 822, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, issue a Proclamation of Civil Emergency as follows:

Background and Need

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus and raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 6. Since the initial detection of the virus in March and April, 2009, it has spread through 53 American states and territories and over 200 countries, resulting in over 180,000 laboratory confirmed cases and over 2,000 deaths. The 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus is the predominant influenza virus in circulation worldwide and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has predicted a significant increase in cases in the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010. On July 24, 2009 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, acting pursuant to her authority under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. §247-d-6, renewed the April 26, 2009 determination by former acting Secretary Charles E. Johnson that a public health emergency exists nationwide involving 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) which affects or has significant potential to affect national security.

To prevent the incidence and severity of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established guidance for the vaccination of at risk populations, based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. With respect to seasonal influenza, it is recommended that all children between the ages of 6 months and 19 years be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. With respect to 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), it is recommended that the entire U.S. population be vaccinated, with initial vaccination afforded to high risk groups defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Funding for the seasonal influenza vaccination is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Funding for the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is provided by the federal government.

Several state agencies are involved in planning for the administration of statewide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccinations. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education are organizing a statewide campaign to provide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination to children in school based clinics and other community based organizations. Once the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is available in October, 2009, the Maine Center for Disease Control will coordinate and facilitate the provision of the vaccine throughout the State of Maine in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The availability of statewide school based vaccination clinics for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) is threatened due to concerns about potential liability relating to the administration of the vaccines. These current conditions, including the imminent threat of influenza pandemic, constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of the people of the State of Maine and constitute a civil emergency or disaster within the meaning of the relevant emergency management statutes.

Mission and Scope

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To respond to the current public health emergency, I order and declare the following:

A. A civil emergency is imminent, caused by the public health emergency.

B. The Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education shall coordinate with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency to identify those health care workers duly licensed and authorized to administer influenza vaccines in the State of Maine who are able and available to participate in the planned vaccinations for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1).

C. The Maine Center for Disease Control, Department of Education and Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate and facilitate the establishment, implementation, administration and operation of school supported vaccine clinics in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

D. The relevant provisions of the Maine Pandemic Influenza Plan will be activated to facilitate the distribution and administration of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines.

E. To the extent necessary to assure the timely provision of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education, the Maine Emergency Management Agency will exercise its authority pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A to designate appropriate health care workers licensed in this State and authorized to administer influenza vaccines to participate in vaccination clinics in accordance with the requirements of this Proclamation.

F. All persons designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to participate in vaccine administration pursuant to Paragraph E shall, pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A, be deemed to be an employee of the State and entitled to immunity pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §822.

G. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Maine Emergency Management Agency, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education to respond to this public health emergency. A record of such actions, if any, shall be compiled and presented to me by the heads of the affected departments and agencies on a reasonable and timely basis throughout the duration of this Emergency Proclamation.

H. The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate with the federal government to secure all appropriate influenza vaccines related to this public health emergency provided for by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and other federal funds.

Duration

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Pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §743, this Emergency Proclamation shall expire thirty (30) days from the date of its signature, unless earlier rescinded by the Executive or upon joint resolution of the Legislature terminating the Emergency Proclamation, or unless extended by subsequent action of the Executive.

Given under my hand this 1st day of

September, 2009.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Swears In Judges

September 1, 2009

AUGUSTA –Governor John E. Baldacci today swore in six confirmed members of the judiciary.

Sworn in today in the Governor's Office in the State House were:

Justice Joseph Jabar, of Waterville, newly confirmed to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

Justice Robert W. Clifford, of Lewiston, to Active Retired Associate Justice to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

Justice Samuel Collins Jr., of Rockland, to Active Retired Associate Justice to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. This is a reappointment.

Judge Ronald Daigle, of Fort Kent, to Active Retired District Court Judge.

Judge James MacMichael, of Skowhegan, to Active Retired District Court Judge.

Daniel Driscoll, of Kennebunk, was newly appointed to the District Court.

Judicial nominees were reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the full Senate.

"Maine will be well served by these outstanding individuals," said Governor Baldacci. "I am confident that they will exhibit great dedication in upholding the laws of this State."

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Governor Mourns Death of Soldier with Maine Ties

September 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

Private First Class Jordan M. Brochu was killed Monday, Aug. 31, while serving in Afghanistan with Company C 1/17th Infantry Battalion from Fort Lewis, Wash. Private Brochu's family lives in Oakland.

"Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Private Brochu," Governor Baldacci said. "Jordan was dedicated to the military and to public service. On behalf of the State, I want to express our most sincere condolences."

Governor Baldacci spoke with the family this afternoon.

"Jordan's mother said that her son wanted to make his family and his community proud. He did that with his service. He has made us all very proud," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci will order flags flown at half-staff on the day of Private Brochu's funeral.

No further information is available at this time.

State of Maine
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Governor Signs Proclamation Placing Challenge of Marriage Law on Ballot

September 2, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a proclamation that will place a People's Veto of "An Act To End Discrimination in Civil Marriage and Affirm Religious Freedom" on the ballot for the Nov. 3 election.

Secretary of State Matt Dunlap has determined that the effort to reject the law gathered enough signatures of registered Maine votes to stay the law and place the question on the November ballot.

"I fully support this legislation, and believe it guarantees that all Maine citizens are treated equally under our State's civil marriage laws," Governor Baldacci said. "But I also have a Constitutional obligation to set the date for the election once the Secretary of State has certified that enough signatures have been submitted. I am confident that Maine voters will make the right decision on this important issue when they cast their ballots in the fall."

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State Agencies Closed Friday

September 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reminded the public that many Maine State government offices are closed on Friday, Sept. 4, 2009, as a cost saving initiative for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Biennial State Budget.

"Please plan ahead for any services you may need from State agencies during this and the other State government shutdown days," said Governor Baldacci. "When scheduling the days, every effort has been made to reduce the impact to Maine people, businesses and communities."

The public is encouraged to check with a specific agency before seeking State services on Friday, Sept. 4, 2009.

The reference to the State closures is Public Law 2009, Chap. 213, Part SSS: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chapters/PUBLIC213-PtCtoEnd.asp

This is the third of 10 closure days between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. The other dates that State agencies and offices will be closed are as follows:

Friday, October 9, 2009

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Friday, January 15, 2010

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Friday, March 12, 2010

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Friday, May 28, 2010

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$8.5 Million Grant to Help Insure More Mainers

September 3, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that Maine will receive $8.5 million this year to provide affordable health insurance for uninsured part-time, seasonal and direct care workers in large businesses. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced the grant today while visiting Maine. The State is also eligible for up to $8.5 million each year for the next four years, for a total of $42.5 million over the five year project period.

"We are very pleased to be one of the States selected in this very competitive national grant program," said Governor Baldacci. "Our Office of Health Policy and Finance led the team that put together the proposal. These are much needed funds that enable the Dirigo Health Agency to serve more uninsured part-time, seasonal and direct-care workers. Importantly, the grant will also help Dirigo to become an insurance exchange, as envisioned in national health reform proposals."

This funding will allow the Dirigo Health Agency to help part-time, seasonal and direct care workers in firms with more than 50 employees. Those firms are more likely to offer employer-based health insurance. Vouchers will help workers purchase coverage through private health insurance plans offered by their employers. Any health insurance plan meeting criteria for comprehensive coverage may be purchased with the vouchers.

Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, will serve as project director, managing subcontracts with the Dirigo Health Agency for provision of health coverage. The Muskie School at University of Southern Maine will conduct an evaluation of the work. The Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance will convene a Business Advisory Committee with the Dirigo Health Agency to guide the program and assist in the design of a special insurance plan to be offered by Dirigo in July 2010 for part-time and seasonal workers who do not have access to workplace health insurance.

"Dirigo is a work in progress," said Riley. "This grant supports Dirigo and allows the Agency the opportunity to innovate and provide affordable coverage this year to nearly 3,500 Mainers employed as direct care workers or in part-time and seasonal jobs. These are uninsured workers in jobs that are key to Maine's economy who now will have an opportunity to secure affordable coverage."

Uninsured direct care, seasonal and part-time workers who work in large firms that provide health insurance will be able to enroll in January 2010 and receive vouchers to make that coverage affordable. With the Business Advisory Group, a special plan to meet the needs of other seasonal and part-time workers who are not offered health insurance at work will be developed next year.

The Dirigo Health Agency has been undergoing a restructuring of the product offered, as required by law, and will add this new product to its portfolio.

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Governor Recognizes 45th Anniversary of Maine Community Action Organization

September 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – In a State House ceremony today, Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed officials of the Maine Community Action Organization (CAP), representatives from Maine's Congressional Delegation offices and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and other supporters to proclaim September as Community Action Month. The Governor recognized the 45 years of dedicated service of the Maine CAPs to people across the State.

"Maine CAPs fill an absolutely vital role in communities across this State and they've been a mainstay in our safety net for 45 years," said Governor Baldacci. "They are one-stop shops where families can find support - from fuel assistance, to housing, to energy conservation and children's programs. Thousands of families - each with their own story – are helped each year by Maine CAPs."

According to Maine Community Action, its member agencies served more then 200,000 individuals in the past year. Among the many services offered by Maine CAPS, the agencies have been instrumental in providing fuel assistance through the Keep ME Warm program. They also provide resources to individuals and families through critical job skills training, early childhood education through Head Start and health services.

"In these very challenging economic times, there is no better time to recognize the important work that Maine CAPs do every day," said the Governor. "Now, more than ever, we need a strong CAP network working on behalf of our people."

The Governor issued the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, community action agencies were created when the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was signed into law; and

WHEREAS, community action agencies have for 45 years promoted self-sufficiency for the limited income; and

WHEREAS, community action agencies have made an essential contribution to individuals and families in Maine by providing them with innovative and cost-effective programs; and

WHEREAS, community action agencies are needed as major participants in the reform of the welfare system as we know it; and

WHEREAS, welfare reform in Maine has benefited from the State's partnership with community action agencies; and

WHEREAS, those with limited income continue to need opportunities to improve their lives and their living conditions thus ensuring that all citizens are able to live in dignity; and

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WHEREAS, Maine and the entire United States must continue to wage war on poverty by providing support and opportunities for all citizens in need of assistance,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of September, 2009 as

COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize community action agencies' 45 years of continued service to the people of Maine.

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Governor Commends Saddleback Initiative to Promote Education and Physical Activity

September 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – At a State House event, Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Warren Cook, CEO and General Manager of Saddleback Maine, and others for the announcement of the PEAK Program, an initiative of Saddleback to encourage Maine children to excel in their studies and get outside to engage in physical activity. PEAK stands for Promoting Education and Activity for Kids, and promises to provide discounted season passes for all Maine honor roll students. Each honor roll student in Maine will be eligible to purchase a season pass for $49.

"Saddleback's PEAK Program is a great incentive for Maine kids and recognizes how lucky we as Mainers are to live in a state rich with natural resources," said Governor Baldacci. "Saddleback's program encourages our youth to not only work hard at school, but to get outside and have fun."

The Governor said that he was excited early in the summer when Saddleback CEO Warren Cook told him about the program. The Governor has promoted family outdoor activities and experiences through the Take it Outside program, which has been supported by a number of initiatives developed by the Maine Department of Conservation under the leadership of Commissioner Patrick McGowan.

The Governor said getting outside has important health benefits.

"Obesity is a serious health problem in the United States and in Maine," said the Governor. "Being obese or overweight puts you at risk for many serious health issues, including heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and more. In Maine, a full 30 percent of youth are obese or overweight. Addressing this issue is vital to the health and welfare of our most valuable resource, our children."

Bob Crowley, the winner of the Survivor: Gabon reality television show and retired teacher, was also on hand to talk about the merits of the Saddleback program.

The Governor and Crowley presented the first pass to 10 year-old Grant Tobias, a 5th grade student at Yarmouth Elementary School.

For more information about Saddleback's PEAK Program, visit www.saddlebackmaine.com

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Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on Thursday, Sept. 10

September 10, 2009

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Private First Class Jordan M. Brochu, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009.

According to the Department of Defense, Private First Class Jordan M. Brochu, died Aug. 31, while serving in Afghanistan. He was with Company C 1/17th Infantry Battalion from Fort Lewis, Wash. Private Brochu's family lives in Oakland.

The funeral service for Private First Class Jordan M. Brochu is planned for 9 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 10 at the Faith Evangelical Free Church Study, in Waterville.

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Governor Participates in Day of Remembrance Blood Drive

September 11, 2009

Observes National Preparedness Month

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of the Maine Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross and volunteers to underscore the need for blood donations, recognize first responders and observe National Preparedness Month. The blood drive is a joint effort between the American Red Cross and the Boston Red Sox.

"Today, we look back in remembrance, honoring those whose lives were lost on September 11th, 2001," said Governor Baldacci. "At the same time, our attention is very much in the present as volunteer blood donors, those silent heroes, come to give of themselves to help save lives that are dependent upon this simple act of kindness."

The annual Day of Remembrance Blood Drive recognizes that Americans opened their hearts in an out-flowing of sympathy, patriotism and compassion following the attacks of September 11th. One of the ways in which people responded was to donate blood in record numbers.

The Governor reminded Mainers that today, patients throughout Maine depend on that same compassionate response.

"The Red Cross blood drive today symbolizes the ongoing, daily need for this precious resource," said the Governor.

The Governor, American Red Cross and the Maine Emergency Management Agency also reminded residents of their key role in keeping themselves and their communities safe. Representatives from the Maine Emergency Management Agency were at the Augusta Armory event to answer questions and provide information on avoiding, preparing for and responding to emergencies.

"The more prepared people are by learning the skills they need to keep their families safe, the stronger and more ready we will be to face the unexpected," said the Governor.

The Governor issued the following proclamation to recognize the month of September as Preparedness Month. The text of the proclamation follows.

WHEREAS, every citizen of the State of Maine is vulnerable to disasters of some type, including natural and human-made; and

WHEREAS, experience tells us by preparing ahead of time-by getting an emergency preparedness kit, making a plan and being informed, people can better respond to, recover from, and lessen physical, emotional and financial impact of a disaster or other emergency; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross wants everyone to have the confidence and peace of mind that comes with being prepared; and

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WHEREAS, National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security each September to raise public awareness about the importance of preparing for all types of disasters and to encourage Americans to take action to prepare for disasters and emergencies in their homes businesses and schools,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September, 2009 as

PREPAREDNESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all residents, businesses, government agencies, and civic organizations in the state to learn about the potential for disasters in Maine, learn how to stay safe, and make sure their emergency plans are in place.

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Governor Addresses Annual Meeting of Graduate School of Biomedical Science

September 11, 2009

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined faculty, students and partners of the University of Maine's Graduate School of Biomedical Science at their annual meeting. Three years ago the Governor welcomed the first 12 students of the school. The biomedical school was a signature initiative of the Governor, outlined in his 2005 State of the State Address.

The Governor said that the graduate school increases opportunities for higher education and workforce training and builds the capacity in Maine for research and development, technology and innovation to thrive, attracting more good-paying jobs to the state.

"Three years ago I stood here to celebrate this bold step and its promise to better align our education system with Maine's research and development strengths," said Governor Baldacci. "I am pleased to see the graduate students here today who are working toward their dreams and in turn will add to the capacity of the State to harness the promise of biomedical research."

The graduate school is a collaborative effort between a number of vibrant research institutions in the State: the University of Maine; the University of Southern Maine; the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine; the Jackson Laboratory; the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory; Maine Medical Center Research Institute; and Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems.

"Building our research and development is an important part of my economic plan to grow good paying jobs in Maine," said the Governor. "Even in these tough economic times, we know we have to make investments in Maine's future. That means building on the innovation, hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of Maine people to generate new knowledge, build new companies, transform existing industries and create jobs."

The graduate school today unveiled a new Governor John E. Baldacci Student Award for Outstanding Presentation in Biomedical Sciences. The award will be given at subsequent annual meetings of the Graduate School of Biomedical Science. It was named for Governor Baldacci in recognition of his support for the creation of the program.

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Governor Participates in a Day of Service and Remembrance

September 11, 2009

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from the City of Bangor, members of Maine AmeriCorps and Maine Commission for Community Service and other volunteers to participate in a Day of Service and Remembrance. President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which among other provisions officially recognizes September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. The group gathered at Park Wood Transitional Housing to help clear underbrush, plant perennials and create a picnic area in the area.

"This September 11th, Americans across the nation will remember the tragic events of eight years ago, and serve in their communities to honor the victims and heroes of that day," said Governor Baldacci. "This new National Day of Service and Remembrance is inspired by the remarkable spirit of service that emerged in the wake of the tragedy on September 11th, 2001, and the widespread compassion that helped to heal our nation. By using this day as an opportunity to reach out into our communities and help others, we honor September 11th victims, survivors, their families, first responders and volunteers."

Each year more than 350,000 Mainers volunteer in their communities. They provide vital support to Maine schools and shelters, hospitals and hot lines and other neighborhood efforts. Needs remain great across the State and opportunities exist for everyone to get involved through volunteering.

"I join the President in having confidence that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things," said the Governor. "That's why I encourage Mainers to come together and help revitalize our communities by volunteering."

For more information on Maine people can visit www.VolunteerMaine.org

The Governor issued the following proclamation for a Day of Service and Remembrance.

WHEREAS, on September 11, 2001, terrorist ruthlessly attacked the United States leading to the tragic death of thousands of innocent United States citizens and other citizens from more than 90 different countries and territories; and

WHEREAS, in response to the attacks in New York City, Washington D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania, firefighters, police officers, military personnel, all emergency medical technicians, and other first responders immediately and without concern for their own well-being rose to service, in a heroic attempt to protect the lives of those still at risk, consequently saving thousands of men and women; and

WHEREAS, in the days, weeks, and months following the attacks, thousands of people in the United States and other nations spontaneously volunteered to help support the rescue and recovery efforts, braving both physical and emotional hardship; and

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WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of brave men and women continue to serve every day, having answered the call to duty as members of our nation's armed forces with thousands having given their lives, or been injured to defend our nation's security and prevent future terrorist attacks; and

WHEREAS, the entire nation witnessed and shared in the tragedy of 9/11 and in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks became unified under a remarkable spirit of service and compassion that inspired and helped heal the nation; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of people in the United States from all 50 states as well as others who live in 170 different countries already observe the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks each year by personally engaging in service, good deeds, and other charitable acts; and

WHEREAS; as on March 31, 2009, congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which included for the first time the authorization and Federal recognition of September 11 as a "National Day of Service and Remembrance", a bill signed into law on April 21, 2009 by President Barack Obama; and Congresswoman Matsui introduced a house resolution declaring September 11, 2009 a "National Day of Service and Remembrance",

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2009 as a

DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBERANCE

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Governor Rides in United Bikers of Maine's Toy Run

September 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts for the 28th Annual United Bikers of Maine Toy Run. Every year, the participants of the event donate thousands of toys for distribution to children during the holidays.

Bikers gathered at the Augusta Civic Center, departing from there for the Windsor Fairgrounds. This event is considered the largest one-day charity event in the State.

"The Toy Run proves again that there are no bounds to the generosity of Maine people, of their commitment to their community and of their great spirit," said Governor Baldacci.

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Governor Mourns Death of Former Chancellor of the University of Maine System

September 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the passing of Bob Woodbury, former President of the University of Southern Maine and Chancellor of the University of Maine System.

"Bob was a visionary leader of the University and its impact on the State of Maine," said the Governor. "He was a good and valued person who respected others and he was deeply committed to Maine communities, giving a lifetime of service. My sympathies go out to Bob's family."

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Governor Baldacci Participates in 33rd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers

September 15, 2009

ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci praised the spirit of cooperation that characterized the 33rd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers in St. John, New Brunswick.

Governor Baldacci is the current Chair of the New England Governors' Conference. He and New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham served as co-chairs for the 33rd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers.

Seven resolutions were signed by the participants of the conference. Topics ranged from regional energy, green economy and pandemic preparedness issues.

"The current global financial crisis hastens us to find collaborative regional approaches to economic, energy and other issues," said Governor Baldacci. "Working together and combining our strengths, we can stake out opportunities to grow good paying jobs and increase our energy independence."

Specific sessions today included: The Green Economy; Energy Trade and Transmission Developments; The Regional Economy; Climate Change; Energy Efficiency; and Pandemic Preparedness.

The resolutions were signed today are:

• Resolution Concerning the Green Economy;

• Resolution Concerning Renewable Energy;

• Resolution Concerning Climate Change;

• Resolution Concerning Energy Efficiency;

• Resolution Concerning Pandemic Preparedness;

• Resolution Concerning 400th Anniversary of Cupids, Newfoundland and Labrador; and

• Resolution Concerning Trade.

For the text of the resolutions as agreed upon at the Conference, please go to: http://www.scics.gc.ca/

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NextGen College Investing Plan Celebrates 10th Anniversary During College Savings Month

September 16, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued a proclamation today naming September 2009 as College Savings Month in Maine. The Governor spoke at a brief ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of Maine's college savings plan, the NextGen College Investing Plan.®

Launched a decade ago, NextGen is the fifth-largest college savings plan in the nation, with more than $4.4 billion in assets.

"September is back to school and it is also time to take action on college savings," Baldacci said. "With NextGen firmly established and ever-evolving over the past 10 years, our citizens have the best opportunity and a firm foundation to help pay for a college education. Being able to save for college tuition now can be a big help later in life."

The Governor presented the proclamation to Beth Bordowitz, CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine, during a ceremony at the State House. Also in attendance was Tammy and Christopher Creswell, NextGen account owners who live in St. Albans. The Creswell's three children for whom the college savings accounts were opened also attended the ceremony.

NextGen was created by the Maine Legislature in 1999 as a qualified tuition program, and is designed to help families prepare for higher education expenses.

"NextGen is a successful program that has become even more vital as college tuitions rise," said Bordowitz. "FAME is proud to play a role in helping so many Maine students reach their college dreams."

NextGen is a Section 529 plan administered by FAME, with Merrill Lynch as the program manager. NextGen's earnings are state and federal income-tax-deferred, and are tax-free so long as the withdrawals are used for qualified higher education expenses.

Governor Baldacci noted that among other NextGen benefits to residents, the Harold Alfond College Challenge enables Mainers to easily augment their savings for their children's education. This first-in-the-nation program provides a $500 grant for every Maine newborn to start a NextGen savings account for future college expenses. There are no income limits to participate in the program.

Other NextGen benefits for Mainers currently include:

• A one-time $200 initial matching grant to help Maine families with adjusted gross incomes of $75,000 or less open their NextGen account;

• Up to $250 per year, per beneficiary, tax deduction for Maine taxpayers who make contributions to a NextGen plan;

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• Waiver of the annual account maintenance fee;

• Direct deposit available for Maine income tax refunds;

• For Maine workers, Life-long Learning Accounts that provide employer-matched individual NextGen accounts to help employees upgrade their skills and education while meeting the demands of businesses for a skilled workforce; and

• Annual need based scholarships for qualifying Maine students.

For more information on the NextGen Plan, go to http://www.famemaine.com/NextGen/home.asp

or call FAME at 1-800-228-3734.

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Governor Celebrates Gas-to-Energy Facility

September 17, 2009

NORRIDEGWOCK – Governor John E. Baldacci participated in the ribbon cutting of the gas-to-electricity system at Waste Management's Crossroads Landfill. By using methane gas created through the decomposition of wastes, the facility will be able to generate enough electricity to power approximately 3,500 homes.

The Governor said he is pleased that Waste Management is working to complement the State's efforts to achieve energy self-sufficiency.

"This project is an important step in helping us achieve a number of goals we have in Maine: reducing harmful greenhouse gases; reducing our dependency on foreign oil; and building our economy. Maine is a leader in protecting our natural resources for future generations and protecting the health of our citizens, and we're putting our State on a path to energy independence and security," said the Governor.

The Governor and the Maine Legislature have set aggressive goals to move Maine on the path of energy independence.

"The State can't do it alone," said the Governor. "It will take the combined efforts of the public and private sectors to succeed, and that's why today is so important. Waste Management is taking steps to help us as we continue along our path to building our energy future together – a future that is built upon clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources."

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Governor Praises Senate Passage of Collins' Provision on Truck Limits

September 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said he was pleased that the full Senate has voted in support of a one-year pilot program authored by Senator Susan Collins. The provision will exempt Maine's Interstate highway system from the current federal truck weight limit. The Collins' proposal was part of the Fiscal Year 2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations legislation.

"Approval of Senator Collins' one-year project is an important step in the long and hard-fought efforts to bring common sense to the truck weight limit issue for Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "I applaud the work of Senator Collins and the entire Maine Congressional delegation for its strong advocacy for changing the restrictions that have significantly hampered the ability of Maine businesses to compete regionally," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor and the Maine Department of Transportation have supported changes in the truck weight limits on Maine's Interstate Highways. Allowing loads to move from 80,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds on Maine's Interstate will reduce the number of trucks on the road, thereby increasing safety, while reducing net fuel consumption. Transportation costs would be reduced, improving economic productivity of Maine industry.

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Governor Mourns Death of John Jalbert Jr.

September 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned of the death of former State Representative John B. Jalbert Jr. Jalbert represented the town of Lisbon.

"I enjoyed serving with John Jalbert in the Legislature," said Governor Baldacci. "He was a great storyteller, and he served the people of his community well. He dedicated a great deal of his life to public service. Our deepest sympathies go out to John's family and friends.

Funeral services for Mr. Jalbert have been set for Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009.

In honor of John Jalbert's many years of service to his town, State and nation, the Governor is directing that the United States and State of Maine flags in the Town of Lisbon be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009.

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Governor Baldacci's Statement on the Passing of Arnold Paul

September 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of Arnold Paul, selectman for the town of Eliot and former vice president of the Maine AFL-CIO. Paul passed away last Wednesday.

"I had the opportunity to work with Arnie over the years and was always impressed by his great passion for helping people," Governor Baldacci said. "He fought hard for Maine workers and was instrumental in working to keep the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard open."

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Governor Celebrates Backyard Farms Business Expansion

September 29, 2009

MADISON – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited the new 18-acre greenhouse that is part of a major expansion of Backyard Farms, the largest greenhouse operation in New England. Committed to locally grown, high quality tomato production in an environmentally friendly way, Backyard Farms now employees 200 people in Maine.

"Backyard Farms is the kind of business Maine wants to attract -- responsible operations, good-paying jobs, local investment and community involvement," said Governor Baldacci. "Backyard Farms has created 200 jobs over the past three years and has made significant investments in local economy."

The Governor recognized Backyard Farms for its partnership with the State. When the company began three years ago, it utilized Pine Tree Zone incentives from the State, and a Community Development Block Grant from the State was used by the Town of Madison for public infrastructure support to help bring Backyard Farms to the area.

"The continuing growth of Backyard Farms has been a major success story for Maine and strengthens our agricultural heritage with a clear demonstration of how we can capitalize on modern, high-tech greenhouses," said Governor Baldacci. "I am looking forward to continued successful partnership between the State and Backyard Farms - and continued growth and jobs creation."

For more information on Backyard Farms, visit www.backyardfarms.com

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Governor Renews Civil Emergency Order to Fight Flu, Facilitate School-Based Vaccinations

September 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today renewed a Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent, which was originally signed on Sept. 1. The proclamation enables the State to continue to better respond to the potential dangers of H1N1 flu and to facilitate a statewide vaccination campaign.

"Continued vigilance is necessary as we address the seasonal and H1N1 flu," said Governor Baldacci. "We have built a sustained and proactive outreach effort and need to retain the flexibility by which we can pursue a responsible and aggressive vaccination and public education campaign."

The proclamation protects school districts and other vaccination clinic participants from liability. The proclamation also provides immunity from tort liability for approved health care workers who administer the flu vaccines.

The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of school supported vaccine clinics for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

On April 29, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order that activated the State's H1N1 Response Committee, which includes the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, MEMA, the Department of Education and the Governor's Office.

The text of the proclamation follows:

Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Maine, and pursuant to the relevant provisions of 37-B M.R.S.A. §§ 703, 741, 742, 743 (2) 784-A and 822, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, renew my Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated September 1, 2009 as follows:

Background and Need

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus and raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 6. Since the initial detection of the virus in March and April, 2009, it has spread through 53 American states and territories and nearly 200 countries, resulting in over 180,000 laboratory confirmed cases and over 2,000 deaths. The 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus is the predominant influenza virus in circulation worldwide and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has predicted a significant increase in cases in the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010. On July 24, 2009 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, acting pursuant to her authority under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C.

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§247-d-6, renewed the April 26, 2009 determination by former acting Secretary Charles E. Johnson that a public health emergency exists nationwide involving 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) which affects or has significant potential to affect national security.

To prevent the incidence and severity of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established guidance for the vaccination of at risk populations, based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. With respect to seasonal influenza, it is recommended that all children between the ages of 6 months and 19 years be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. With respect to 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), it is recommended that the entire U.S. population be vaccinated, with initial vaccination afforded to high risk groups defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Funding for the seasonal influenza vaccination is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Funding for the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is provided by the federal government.

Several state agencies are involved in planning for the administration of statewide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccinations. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education are organizing a statewide campaign to provide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination to children and the general public in school based clinics and other public vaccination sites. Once the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is available in October, 2009, the Maine Center for Disease Control will coordinate and facilitate the provision of the vaccine throughout the State of Maine in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The availability of statewide vaccination clinics for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) is threatened due to concerns about potential liability relating to the administration of the vaccines. These current conditions, including the imminent threat of influenza pandemic, constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of the people of the State of Maine and constitute a civil emergency or disaster within the meaning of the relevant emergency management statutes.

Mission and Scope

To respond to the current public health emergency, I order and declare the following:

A. Civil emergency is imminent, caused by the public health emergency.

B. The Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education shall coordinate with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency to identify those health care workers duly licensed and authorized to administer influenza vaccines in the State of Maine who are able and available to participate in the planned vaccinations for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1).

C. The Maine Center for Disease Control, Department of Education and Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate and facilitate the establishment, implementation, administration and operation

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of vaccination clinics in school based settings and other publicly accessible sites in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

D. The relevant provisions of the Maine Pandemic Influenza Plan will be activated to facilitate the distribution and administration of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines.

E. To the extent necessary to assure the timely provision of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education, the Maine Emergency Management Agency will exercise its authority pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A to designate appropriate health care workers licensed in this State and authorized to administer influenza vaccines to participate in vaccination clinics in accordance with the requirements of this Proclamation.

F. All persons designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to participate in vaccine administration pursuant to Paragraph E shall, pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A, be deemed to be an employee of the State and entitled to immunity pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §822.

G. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Maine Emergency Management Agency, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education to respond to this public health emergency. A record of such actions, if any, shall be compiled and presented to me by the heads of the affected departments and agencies on a reasonable and timely basis throughout the duration of this Emergency Proclamation.

H. The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate with the federal government to secure all appropriate influenza vaccines related to this public health emergency provided for by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and other federal funds.

Duration

Pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §743, this Emergency Proclamation shall expire thirty (30) days from the date of its signature, unless earlier rescinded by the Executive or upon joint resolution of the Legislature terminating the Emergency Proclamation, or unless extended by subsequent action of the Executive.

Given under my hand this 30th day of September, 2009.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

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Governor Celebrates University of New England College of Pharmacy

October 1, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci commended University of New England President Danielle Ripich and other UNE school officials, professors and staff for their dedication and leadership to establish the new University of New England College of Pharmacy. The dedication ceremony today included some of the 100 members of the first class of the School of Pharmacy. A third of the students are from Maine.

"We appreciate the efforts of the University of New England to continue to meet the needs of the State and the region," said Governor Baldacci. "UNE is educating health professionals in Maine at a time when we need them most."

In August 2008, Governor Baldacci announced that the UNE College of Pharmacy received a $4 million grant from the Maine Technology Asset Fund. This largest single grant ever received by the University was possible through the $50 million research and development bond approved by voters in November 2007. When the announcement was made a year ago, the College of Pharmacy had no building, faculty or students.

"The research and development that will be done at University of New England's College of Pharmacy will help to build Maine's economy for the future by creating jobs, providing a state-of-the-art research facility and providing the State with much-needed, well-trained pharmacists," said the Governor.

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Governor Honors Maine Soldiers

October 4, 2009

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed home 11 members of the Detachment 14 Operational Support Command and other soldiers from an Embedded Training Team and select individual mobilization at a Freedom Salute ceremony in Bangor. The soldiers served in Iraq and Afghanistan; among other duties they completed dangerous assignments in areas of combat. The event also honors soldiers' families, employers, spiritual and community leaders who supported them through their deployments.

"We celebrate these special individuals for the exemplary work they have done and for their deep and abiding commitment to their country," said the Governor. "The service they have completed in their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan included some of the most dangerous in that region. They performed with distinction in a hostel environment."

The Governor commented on the spirit with which the soldiers achieved their missions. "As soldiers, neighbors, friends and family members, you continually represent the best of this State," said Governor Baldacci.

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Governor Opens Maine Wind Energy Conference

October 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci provided opening remarks to start a day-long conference focused on wind energy development in the State. The Maine Wind Energy Conference, From Grassroots to Blade Tips: Growing Wind Energy in Maine, brought together representatives from municipal and State government, business, economic development and other sectors.

The Governor said Maine is in a unique position to capitalize on its strengths in order to bring about greater energy independence, economic development and job creation by building wind and other renewable sources of energy. Already, Maine produces 95 percent of the wind power in New England and has developed a regulatory approach that is strong, stable and predictable while balancing important environmental considerations.

"Maine is blessed with abundant natural resources and the research going on at the University of Maine puts us in an excellent position for success," said Governor Baldacci. "Growing partnerships across the public and private sectors remains a key component to realizing these goals. We want to move aggressively, while maintaining our commitment to community involvement; and being sensitive to environmental impacts with a thoughtful siting process."

Last month, the Governor led a Renewable Energy Trade Mission to Spain and Germany, and visited a deep-water offshore wind platform in Norway. The trip has the potential to open up incredible opportunities for Maine businesses to attract significant investment to Maine.

Governor Baldacci has also been a leader in the New England region in developing a regional approach to renewable energy production and transmission. The Governor served as the co-chairman of an important meeting of New England Governors, Eastern Canadian Premiers and their representatives in St. John, New Brunswick. He also presented a regional Renewable Energy Blueprint to officials in Washington last month to guide a cooperative approach to renewable energy production and transmission in a way that benefits the State and the region.

In his presentation before the conference attendees, the Governor said much of the ultimate success of wind energy development hinges on partnerships with and among Maine communities. He gave two recent examples of communities that have embraced opportunities to bring wind projects to their areas and hopes to see more community initiated projects.

The Town of Oakfield overwhelmingly approved the development of a 34-turbine wind farm late last month. The votes came during a special town meeting in which voters also rejected a moratorium on wind projects. The project will generate enough electricity to power more than 20,000 homes.

The Fox Island Wind project that will serve Vinalhaven and New Haven is near completion, with power generation expected to begin next month. This is the first community wind project to get off the ground in Maine, and we're proud of its progress.

"Bold steps must be taken now to control our economic and energy future," said Governor Baldacci. "The potential for new jobs, new investments and a new energy future is within our grasp. I look forward to working with you to build Maine's energy future together."

The Conference included presentations exploring options, examples and potential solutions to challenges in promoting wind energy development. Breakout sessions included such topics as financing wind projects of various sizes; innovations on transmission; Maine's new community energy pilot program; and schools and wind programs.

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Governor Receives Official Delegation from Montenegro

October 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci hosted a luncheon today at the Blaine House in honor of an official visit from the country of Montenegro. The Montenegrin delegation, led by Minister of Defense Boro Vucinic, came to Maine as part of a larger visit that included multiple stops in the Washington, D.C., area.

As part of the National Guard State Partnership Program, Maine and Montenegro have enjoyed a relationship that includes sharing information and support in an effort to build and improve relationships between the State and Montenegro. The program's goals reflect an evolving international affairs mission for the National Guard, to promote regional stability and civil-military relationships in support of U.S. policy objectives.

"With exchanges like this, we will continue to build bridges to our friends and allies around the world," said Governor Baldacci. "I'm proud to welcome this delegation to Maine, and I look forward to continued strong relations in the future."

Montenegro became an independent country in 2006 and later that year the State of Maine's partnership with the country was established. In 2007, the President Vujanocvic visited Maine. Since then, the State has expanded its outreach to Montenegro to include economic development and tourism, higher education, public safety and emergency management.

A scholarship was established earlier this year at the University of Maine to encourage students from Montenegro to study in Maine. The two-year graduate tuition scholarship is for a student from the University of Montenegro to pursue a graduate degree at University of Maine in any field in which a degree is offered. The first student is expected to start in January 2010, under this program.

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Governor Celebrates Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative

October 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today opened the final symposium of Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative (NSAI). The initiative was created from a $14.4 million U.S. Department of Labor WIRED grant received in 2006. The grant enabled the promotion of the major workforce and economic development initiative in Maine targeting the economic cluster that includes the industries of boatbuilding, composites and marine trades. The industry-driven, industry-focused project was established to grow these industries through workforce development, R&D, market outreach and infrastructure development.

"I am proud of the accomplishments of Maine's North Star Alliance," said Governor Baldacci. "We have been laying the foundation for the future, and with the investments being made – as well as working together with our industry partners – we will take advantage of great opportunities to grow this cluster and provide good-paying jobs now and for future generations."

The Governor recognized the public and private partners who are active in Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative, including industry and association representatives, State agencies, education institutions and Maine's Congressional Delegation. The North Star Alliance brought for the first time participation from private industry to table with State and local government to address workforce needs.

Additional achievements include:

• Joint partnering led to the funding in Brunswick of the Maine Advanced Technology Center;

• 1,500 Maine workers have received training, giving them advanced skill sets;

• Enhanced the curriculum with the Landing School and Husson University's Boat School;

• 113 secondary and post-secondary instructors have been certified to teach new manufacturing technologies; and

• As of June 30 of this year, $50 million of additional investments have been leveraged as a result of the North Star Alliance Initiative – these investments are from federal grants; State grants through the Maine Technology Institute; and private industry through training fund matches.

Last month, President Obama used the State of Maine's efforts to revitalize the boat building industry as an example of a successful innovation strategy that could be replicated elsewhere.

"These are impressive results, but our work doesn't end here," said the Governor. "Especially during the challenging economic times we find ourselves in, it's more important now than ever that we make strategic investments where they will have the greatest impact. And it takes the contributions of all our partners to ensure we are on the path to sustainable job growth and a healthy economy. I hope that all partners here will pledge to maintain this level of cooperation into the future."

For more information on Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative, please go tohttp://www.maine.gov/wired/index.shtml

More information on the federal Administration's attention to the Maine boat building industry can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nec/StrategyforAmericanInnovation/

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Governor Recognizes Soldier's Family for Establishing Military and Family Retreat

October 7, 2009

LEE – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized Paul and Deana House for their efforts to turn their personal tragedy into something positive for other military families. The Houses are the parents of Sgt. Joel House, who was killed in Taji, Iraq, in 2007. They have established The House in the Woods Inc., A Military and Family Retreat, a nonprofit organization that provides an outdoors experience to those serving in the military and their families, and to veterans.

"In the spirit of celebrating your son Joel, you are reaching out to help members of our military, their families, and veterans," said Governor Baldacci. "Using your talents and expertise - and by sharing Maine's abundant natural beauty and restorative power - your generosity will undoubtedly help countless soldiers and their families heal and reconnect."

The House in the Woods offers a range of outdoor programs including canoeing, hiking and nature tours to small groups. Participants experience challenges together, providing them with the ability to bond while celebrating Maine's abundant natural beauty.

The Governor had contributed funds to the nonprofit from his Governor's contingency account.

The Governor was joined at the event by Walmart officials. Walmart contributed $10,000 to The House in the Woods. Walmart also presented a $5,000 check to the Lincoln Food Cupboard.

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State Agencies Closed Friday

October 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reminded the public that many Maine State government offices are closed on Friday, Oct. 9, 2009, as a cost saving initiative for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Biennial State Budget.

"Please plan ahead for any services you may need from State agencies during this and the other State government shutdown days," said Governor Baldacci. "When scheduling the days, every effort has been made to reduce the impact to Maine people, businesses and communities."

The public is encouraged to check with a specific agency before seeking State services on Friday, Oct. 9, 2009.

The reference to the State closures is Public Law 2009, Chap. 213, Part SSS: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chapters/PUBLIC213-PtCtoEnd.asp

This is the fourth of 10 closure days between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. The other dates that State agencies and offices will be closed are as follows:

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Friday, January 15, 2010

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Friday, March 12, 2010

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Friday, May 28, 2010

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Governor's Statement on Senator Snowe's Decision to Vote Health Care Bill Out of Senate Finance Committee

October 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed the news from Senator Olympia Snowe that she will vote for the health care reform package crafted in the Senate Finance Committee. The Governor issued the following statement upon hearing of the Senator's intentions.

"When the light of history shines on political leaders, they can either move things forward or stand in the way of progress. Senator Snowe has recognized the important opportunity before this country to improve health care for all Americans. She has stepped up to address the challenges that remain ahead, and she is committed to doing the hard work to move forward."

"Senator Snowe is to be commended for her efforts and her commitment to work to solve the challenges ahead. This is not the final word on health care reform, but it allows progress to continue and is therefore a huge step forward."

"Through her efforts to listen, to challenge and to find answers, Senator Snowe has again shown the leadership that Maine people have come to expect from her."

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Governor Recommends Broadband Projects for Recovery Act Funding

October 14, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today submitted final comments to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration concerning proposals for broadband expansion in Maine.

The comments are the final step in a State process to recommend projects for funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration will review the recommendations over the coming months and make the decision on funding through the Recovery Act.

In total, the Governor supported $42.7 million in proposed projects recommended by the Broadband Strategy Council and the ConnectME Authority.

"As we work to grow Maine's economy and provide opportunities to our people, improved broadband access is critical," Governor Baldacci said. "Our greatest assets in Maine are our people. They are successful on the world stage every day. With expanded broadband access and public support to increase private investment, we can unlock new potential for our families and businesses alike."

The Governor's letter to NTIA is attached.

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Lawrence E. Strickling

Administrator

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

United States Department of Commerce

1401 Constitution Ave, NW

Washington, D.C. 20230

October 14, 2009

Dear Administrator Strickling:

As a geographically large state with a small population, Maine has been especially challenged in providing high-quality, cost-effective broadband service to our homes, businesses and anchor institutions. While our ConnectME Authority has distributed millions in grants to stimulate private investment in broadband in Maine, many parts of our State remain completely unserved or severely underserved.

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Robust ARRA funding would provide a critical boost to our local efforts to bring 21st century technology to Maine, bringing with it both short-term and long-term economic opportunity.

Process for Determining State Recommendations

Maine received information about seventy-two (72) projects that would potentially touch on services in our State. Fifty-three (53) of the projects offered only peripheral impact, if any, within Maine. With one notable exception (Broadband for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), we do not wish to provide encouragement for those projects.

Nineteen (19) of the projects specifically provide services to Maine. As the first step in our State review process, the proposals were reviewed and commented upon at public meetings of the "Broadband Strategy Council," which is composed of legislators and a representative of our Public Utilities Commission, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, our state Office of Information Technology, our state broadband initiative agency (ConnectME), our University system and the school and library network. As the second step, the ConnectME Authority reviewed and confirmed the Council's recommendations. Public input was invited and provided during both steps of the process.

To prepare final comments, I reviewed the recommendations of the Broadband Strategy Council and ConnectME, and conferred with Dick Thompson, the State's Chief Information Office as well as members of my staff. I want to thank the Broadband Strategy Council members for their hard work in a very short time frame. Their analysis and commentary provide the basis for my comments to you.

Recommended Projects

Based on advice from the Broadband Strategy Council and the ConnectME Authority, as well as consultation with Maine's Chief Information Officer, the State strongly recommends that NTIA and/or RUS approve the following grant applications, grouped by funding category and listed in alphabetical order by project name. Attachment A contains a project summary for each and the rationale for our positive recommendation.

Broadband Infrastructure – 4 projects totaling $38,075,121

• Aroostook County Last Mile Project• Fairpoint Communications, Inc (applicant)

• Chebeague Island Broadband Initiative• Chebeague.net, Inc. (applicant)

• "Three Ring Binder" Middle Mile Project• Biddeford Internet Corp (d.b.a. GWI) (applicant)

• Washington/Hancock County Last Mile Project• Fairpoint Communications, Inc (applicant)

Sustainable Broadband Adoption – 2 projects totaling $3,436,608

• Broadband with a Purpose Maine• Fairpoint Communications, Inc. (applicant)

• Washington County WiMAX Project• Axiom Technologies (applicant)

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Public Computer Center – 1 project totaling $1,216,467

• Maine Library Learning Network• Maine State Library (applicant)

Projects of Interest

There were several projects that appeared to have merit in meeting our goal to provide broadband throughout Maine, but we were not able to make a definitive recommendation either because we lacked sufficient information or we had some technical concerns with the proposal. These projects are further described and commented upon in Attachment B.

Last Mile Project Motorbrain Consulting (applicant)

Middle Mile Project NATVentures, LLC (applicant)

Sustainable Broadband NATVentures, LLC (applicant)

Public Computer Center Faith in Action Community Connection (applicant)

Public Computer Center Southern Aroostook Cooperative Board of Education (applicant)

If you have questions about our position on any of these projects, please feel free to contact me, or our state point of contact, Dick Thompson.

As you deliberate nationally on the use of ARRA funds for broadband, I hope that we can work together to ensure that projects that you approve will provide a true and long-lasting public benefit.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

cc: Ian Martinez

ATTACHMENT A -- Maine Projects Recommended for Funding

(listed by funding category and alphabetically by project name)

Broadband Infrastructure

Aroostook County Last-Mile Project (Fairpoint) ($7,865,817 grant) Summary: This project will expand high speed broadband to remote, underserved areas of Aroostook County, the northernmost rural county in Maine. This is a last mile project (with some enabling middle mile components) that is critical to the region's competitiveness in a 21st century economy. Northern New England Telephone Operations LLC d/b/a FairPoint Communications-NNE is the co-applicant.

Comment: This project strengthens Maine's telecommunications infrastructure by providing critical last mile service to remote and unserved areas in Aroostook County. Funding of the project will accelerate deployment of this service which is so important because these areas are struggling economically. Deployment of this service is absolutely necessary for economic development in the region. As Maine's largest telecommunications provider the applicant is working closely with all of our economic development entities in a collaborative effort to ensure project success.

Chebeague Island Broadband Initiative (chebeague.net, inc.) ($73,470 grant and $75,000 loan)

Summary:The project will extend broadband Internet services to unserved portions of Chebeague Island and will improve bandwidth for the entire Island, which is underserved. In addition, the project will position the system for possible future microwave acquisition of bandwidth and may be used to extend needed cellular telephone service to the Island which, in large part, is unserved.

Comment: This is a very modest project to support one of Maine's island communities. The unique locally-organized effort provides service in a community that otherwise would be unserved. We are confident that this previous ConnectME Authority grantee will be able to successfully complete the project as presented.

"Three Ring Binder" Middle-Mile Project (Biddeford Internet Corp, dba GWI) ($25,402,904 grant)

Summary:The Three Ring Binder project is a middle mile open-access collaborative fiber optic network in the most rural and remote areas of Maine. This project allows the delivery of 100 Mbits+ broadband connectivity to businesses, households, and community anchor institutions in these areas facilitating rural economic development, job stimulation, education, and health care.

Comment: This project would be of great benefit for Maine's long-term infrastructure needs, providing critical middle mile capabilities. It complements the other last mile projects we are recommending for funding. The project supports all elements of our economy: consumers, small businesses, and high speed users in our research and development community. It also levers other initiatives such as rural health care, cyber infrastructure for the University of Maine and other research institutes, and the Maine School and Library Network. Furthermore, this technology will enhance the provision of service in rural Maine. Using open access, this proposal is a collaboration of multiple partners with long term maintenance of the dark fiber assets managed by a neutral third party. It strengthens Maine's telecommunications infrastructure by providing high speed redundancy and diversity within the state and with regional/national connectors.

Washington/Hancock Last Mile (Fairpoint) ($4,732,930 grant)

Summary: This project will expand high speed broadband to remote, underserved areas of Washington and Hancock Counties in northeast Maine. This is a last mile project that is a critical component of the region's economic development plan. FairPoint Communications, Inc. is the lead applicant, the co-applicant is Northern New England Telephone Operations LLC d/b/a FairPoint Communications - NNE.

Comment:This project strengthens Maine's telecommunications infrastructure by providing critical last mile service to remote and unserved areas in Washington and Hancock Counties. Funding of the project will accelerate deployment of this service which is so important because these areas are struggling economically. Deployment of this service is absolutely necessary for economic development in the region. As Maine's largest telecommunications provider the applicant is working closely with all of our economic development entities in a collaborative effort to ensure project success.

Sustainable Broadband Adoption Projects

"Broadband with a Purpose" (Fairpoint) ($1,802,384 grant)

Summary: Broadband with a Purpose-Maine will help the people and institutions of rural Maine understand how broadband can be used to access global resources, work more productively, and enjoy the social benefits of being connected. It is designed to replace the "build it and they will come mentality" with a project based learning approach emphasizing the value of broadband.

Comment: Sustainable adoption efforts are very important to increase the take rate and so this project is well targeted. The application presents a defined plan and time table to achieve results with measurable outcomes. It includes important partnerships with the Economic Development Districts and the Maine Community College System and a relationship with Information Technology Exchange (ITE) to provide low cost computers to low income families.

Washington County WiMAX (Axiom Technologies) ($1,634,224 grant)

Summary: The Washington County WiMAX Project focuses on helping the fishing, agricultural, and health care sectors develop and demonstrate the effective uses of the technology. An education and training program for the fishing and farming industry will be implemented, and a pilot program will be developed for the use of a mobile telemedicine system.

Comment: Axiom Technology is a small Maine based business that has successfully deployed services with funding received from the ConnectME Authority. The project takes a holistic approach, attacking many of the issues holding back development of infrastructure and demand in Washington County, one of our poorest counties. This project provides a sustainability model for two of Maine's natural resource-based industries, farming and fishing, which are challenged. The company is planning to collaborate with the University of Maine - Machias to achieve the goals of the project.

Public Computer Center

Maine Library Learning Network (Maine State Library)($1,216,467 grant)

Summary: The ME Library Learning Network creates eight regional and eleven local public library computer centers equipped with computers, accessible workstations and IP-based video conference technology. These centers will expand access to broadband technology in Maine, and provide access and training for rural and un-served communities, small businesses, an aging population, and people with disabilities.

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Comment: As a public computer center initiative, this application enhances capabilities at eight regional and eleven local libraries located in remote parts of Maine. In these communities, libraries are the key anchor institutions. The project complements other efforts to deploy broadband technology and supports those households who can not afford computers or broadband access. This is critical because many essential services are available online such as: health care information, education, financial planning, job-searches, online banking, and e-government services.

ATTACHMENT B -- Maine Projects of Interest

(listed alphabetically by project name)

Faith in Community Connection

Summary: Faith in Action is partnering with the Downeast Family YMCA to operate a Senior Center in the recently closed middle school building in Ellsworth. The YMCA will operate their childcare programs there, while Faith in Action operates programs for seniors in the same building, sharing some space. The grant would allow the organizations to provide computer classes for senior and broadband access that can also be used by children and families.

Comment: While this project has some merit, more information was needed to answer a number of questions such as: what is the long term sustainability of the effort once the grant is exhausted; is the project fulfilling an unmet need; and what problem needs to be solved?

Motorbrain Consulting

Summary: Motorbrain will provide HughesNet high-speed satellite Internet service to 3400 unserved Maine homes and businesses where there are no existing broadband services available for a period of 24 months at no cost to the consumer. Through a collaborative effort with rural municipalities, they will identify last-mile consumers where cable Internet and DSL are not available.

Comment: Satellite service can provide a benefit to very remote households and businesses in Maine that have no other options. Satellite services do not currently qualify for grants by the ConnectME Authority, which has concerns about the technical quality and reliability of current services. However, satellite services appear to qualify for NTIA grants, and as an intermediate step towards more robust service, would be of benefit to some homes and businesses in Maine.

NATVentures (2 applications)

Summary: To expand high speed broadband to rural, underserved areas of Maine, including all Native American Tribal lands within Maine; also a public computer center project.

Comment: The State of Maine is interested in supporting its Native American tribes which are located in remote, economically challenged regions of Maine. Unfortunately the material provided did not contain sufficient detail for the Council to make a thorough evaluation.

Southern Aroostook Cooperative Board of Education

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Summary: On behalf of its partners, Region Two School of Applied Technology is requesting funds to expand computing facilities at 17 sites throughout the state of Maine. The goal of this project is to enhance educational services for adult community members at regional vocational and technical schools by expanding access to broadband.

Comment: This proposal does not define an enduring or measurable benefit or a means to achieve a sustainable program once the grant is exhausted. Although there is a focus on retraining displaced workers, it is unclear how this would be coordinated with other retraining efforts. In addition the lack of detail regarding the need and programs prevent a thorough review.

ATTACHMENT C -- Maine Projects Not Recommended for Funding

USA Webhost

Summary: WiME I is a proof of concept of 4G as an access network technology for rural Maine, and of naming and associations over IPv6 as a link characteristic-informed, locality-aware technology.

Comment: This proof of concept project is not aligned with the Council's or ConnectME Authority's vision. Long term viability is questionable as it is not clear how the pilot project would transition into a sustainable service.

USA Webhost

Summary: Reverse 911 services that allow municipalities to enhance their emergency notification processes with massive simultaneous dial out of emergency calls to both broadband consumers in normal or catastrophic conditions.

Comment: This pilot project is not aligned with the Council's or ConnectME Authority's vision and it is not clear that the proposed service fits the RUS/BIP criteria. The direct connection to middle mile infrastructure improvements is not demonstrated.

Vanu Coverage Co. (3 applications with the same coverage area)

Summary: Vanu Coverage Co. proposes to deploy a multi-standard wireless network and operate as a wholesale provider to existing retail wireless operators. This approach would bring voice and broadband data, as well as service provider choice, to unserved and underserved areas in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, and Maine where broadband deployments previously have been cost-prohibitive.

Comment: The three Vanu applications may be an interesting idea but are multistate applications and it is unclear what portions are allocated to Maine. The project relies on as yet uncommitted retail carriers to provide household subscriber service. Furthermore cellular service does not currently meet the ConnectME Authority's definition of broadband service.

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Governor Welcomes PlumChoice to Maine

October 14, 2009

Company Chooses Maine as Location of First Operation Outside its Massachusetts Base

SCARBOROUGH – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined local and State officials and representatives from Maine & Company for the announcement of the newest company to choose to locate in Maine. PlumChoice, a nationwide leader in the remote technical service and support industry, has opened a facility in Scarborough, its first expansion outside of Massachusetts.

"Even in these tough economic times, Maine is attracting new business," said Governor Baldacci. "This growing company chose Scarborough from among a 10-city, multi-state competition. Maine's strong workforce and Pine Tree Zone incentive package were crucial to the successful recruitment of this new employer."

PlumChoice's Scarborough Center of Excellence will provide regional support and training for PlumChoice technicians. The company says it will hire 125 new employees by the end of this year with the potential for more next year. PlumChoice made its decision to locate in Scarborough and within three months had opened its facility.

The Governor said that PlumChoice is the kind of company Maine would like to attract.

"This is an innovative, high-tech business that recognizes the power of Maine workers," said the Governor. "PlumChoice has exclusively used local resources and vendors to upgrade the Scarborough facility. I want to thank the State's economic development team, Scarborough officials, and Maine & Company for their efforts to highlight the many attributes that put Maine at the top of the company's list for their expansion and by doing so will create good-paying jobs for hardworking Mainers."

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Governor Celebrates Natural Gas Expansion

October 15, 2009

BREWER – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline (Maritimes) and local officials from Brewer for the ribbon cutting ceremony of Maritimes' expansion project. The completion of the Phase IV project enables Maritimes' mainline capacity to double.

"Maine has taken a leadership role in diversifying our energy options," said Governor Baldacci. "Maritimes natural gas pipeline corridor provides us with more fuel choices and more secure, reliable supplies. I especially appreciate Maritimes' efforts to talk with and listen to its neighbors and the people affected by its projects to ensure the work gets done with as little impact as possible. The company takes the time to develop efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive projects."

The Phase IV Project includes five new compressor stations, upgrades to existing stations and new pipeline. With completion of Maritimes' Phase IV Project, the company has the capability and flexibility to expand as new supplies become available.

State of Maine StateDocs Digital Archive

Maine Receives Major Federal Investment For Offshore Wind Development

October 15, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined U.S. Energy Secretary Chu and Maine's Congressional Delegation in a conference call to announce that the University of Maine and Consortium partners have been awarded $8 million of Federal Recovery Act funds to expand efforts to develop offshore wind capacity. This grant represents the foundation of an effort that will begin with testing, research and optimization of model floating wind turbines and lead to the deployment of the first 25 MW floating "Stepping Stone" ocean wind farm in the world in 10 years.

Maine is one of three states receiving wind energy funds today, and the only one targeted toward offshore wind. Specifically, the recipient of the State's award is the University of Maine DeepCwind Deepwater Offshore Wind Consortium. The other two recipients are the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Minnesota. The investment from the federal government will help create the first floating deepwater offshore wind program in the United States.

"I want to thank Secretary Chu and the Obama Administration for their tremendous commitment to research, development and implementation of renewable technology and especially offshore wind technology," said Governor Baldacci. "I also want to thank the Maine Congressional delegation and acknowledge our bipartisan efforts to promote clean, home-grown energy development in Maine."

The Governor said that the grant from the U.S. Department of Energy shows the recognition by the Obama Administration of Maine's leadership in wind development. Maine already produces 95 percent of the on-shore wind power in New England. The Governor led a trade mission to Europe in September to seek out new partnerships for Maine businesses expanding into the renewable energy sector. Maine's deep ocean waters relatively close to shore, combined with our extensive maritime industry infrastructure and proximity to large northeastern regional energy markets, makes the Gulf of Maine the ideal location to lead vital deepwater offshore wind development efforts for the nation.

Specifically, the grant to the University of Maine will help fund two years of operations of an Offshore Wind Test Site that will consist of designing, constructing, deployment and monitoring two-10kW and one-100 kW floating offshore wind turbine prototypes. This initial deployment will be extensively monitored and then will lead to enhancements and redeployment. This critical initial research represents the foundation of an effort that dramatically advances Maine's plan to work collaboratively with private partners ultimately achieve 5 GW of wind power by 2030. Using federal figures of 15.6 jobs created for every $1 million in investments in renewable energy, Maine has the potential to create and maintain 15,600 jobs over the 20 years through the 5 GW plan.

The Governor said that his goals include building wind power turbines in Maine and expanding Maine's green workforce. An education component is an important segment of the grant proposal funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. The educational component that spans the spectrum of high-school,

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community college, university education and industry outreach is intended to help develop future jobs and prosperity.

The Governor praised the work of Dr. Habib Dagher, who heads the composites center at the University of Maine, as well as the many public and private partners involved in the offshore wind proposal.

"I applaud the federal government for its confidence in Maine, the University and the talented consortium of businesses, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and agencies that will be partners in this project," said the Governor.

"The DeepCwind Project will complement the Obama Administration's goal of achieving 20 percent of our power a year from wind generation," said the Governor. "We believe Maine will be a leading state in wind production, but more importantly, that we will be the leader for the nation in its quest to become energy independent."

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Governor Celebrates Newest Operational Large-Scale Wind Project

October 16, 2009

EUSTIS – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from TransCanada, local and State representatives, and other partners of the Kibby Wind Power Project at a ceremony marking the completion of the first component of the Kibby Wind Power Project.

"This is an exciting step for Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "Already, the Kibby wind project has spent $78 million right here in the State on material, labor and other services. More than $6 million of that amount has been spent here in Franklin County. In all, about 300 construction jobs have been supported, and eight full-time positions have been created to support the operation and maintenance of turbines."

The 22 turbines installed and operational now will be joined by another 22 in 2010. This will be the single largest wind project in New England. When the full complement of turbines is online, there will be a total of 132 megawatts of installed capacity, enough to provide electricity for 50,000 homes. According to TransCanada, the estimated cost of entire project is $320 million.

"Importantly, the Kibby project solidifies Maine's reputation as the leader in wind power generation in New England," said the Governor. "This project represents a great step forward in Maine as we move aggressively to end our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels and to create jobs by building our renewable energy sector right here in Maine."

Maine already hosts 95% of on-shore wind generation in New England. The State boasts technological and research experts like Dr. Habib Dahger at the University of Maine. The State has also been working to transform its education and training to build the workforce that will be the experts in the renewable energy sector.

Maine was recognized on Thursday by the U.S. Department of Energy for its leadership in wind energy research and technology with a major investment to the University of Maine and its consortium to invest in the development of deepwater off-shore wind.

"We recognize that government can't get us to our goals of energy self-sufficiency alone. We have been creating partnerships at all levels as we pursue these aggressive goals. That's why I've traveled overseas, built regional plans, and worked with the Maine Legislature to make the investments and address hurdles to growing renewable energy," said the Governor.

"The potential we have for renewable energy generation here in Maine is great," Governor Baldacci said. "We have the best natural resources and the best workforce. Together, we are building our energy future, improving our environment for generations to come, and building our economy and good paying jobs right here in Maine."

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Governor Addresses Affordable Housing Conference

October 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today delivered opening remarks at the 2009 Maine Affordable Housing Conference at the Augusta Civic Center. The conference, hosted by MaineHousing, highlighted many innovations undertaken at the State level to address housing issues during these challenging economic times.

"Maine has been recognized for making quick and effective use of funds from the Recovery Act, and we've been aggressive in building opportunities to support housing," said Governor Baldacci. "Earlier this year I helped kick off MaineHousing's Gift of Green program for first-time homebuyers. It's been a very successful program. These and other innovative programs have helped to get families into homes. We know we can't expand our economy and add jobs if we do not have affordable housing for workers to live in."

The Governor talked about affordable housing developments underway in Augusta and Houlton that are generating about 175 jobs. A new senior housing development scheduled to start soon in Bangor will employee about 120 people. MaineHousing estimates that affordable rental developments it already has approved will employ several hundred workers in the construction trades in the coming months.

The Governor introduced Gil Sperling of the U.S. Department of Energy as the keynote speaker at the event. Sperling leads the Weatherization division for the Department of Energy.

"Maine has been a leading state in the emerging field of energy efficiency. Weatherization efforts have enabled us to create jobs while saving residents and businesses money. We currently are putting in place statewide standards for energy auditors and related professions that will cover all our programs," said the Governor.

"The Community Action Program agencies that are doing the weatherization work for MaineHousing report adding 55 new staff positions," the Governor said. "In addition, they have hired 30 new private contractors to assist them. We will see many more jobs added as we make Maine housing more energy efficient – and as we reach toward our goal of weatherizing all homes and most businesses in the State over the next 20 years."

The Governor said that weatherization is only one part of Maine's energy future. The State has earned its reputation as a leader in developing renewable energy, with great promise for expanding green jobs. Maine was recognized on Thursday by the U.S. Department of Energy for its leadership in wind energy research and technology with a major investment to the University of Maine and its consortium to invest in the development of deepwater off-shore wind. On Wednesday, Governor Baldacci will be representing the State in Washington, D.C., as Maine will be recognized for making significant strides in investing in energy efficiency.

Information on all of MaineHousing's programs can be found at http://www.mainehousing.org/

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Governor Celebrates Alfond Youth Center Playground Dedication

October 19, 2009

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci recognized the Waterville Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCA and Walmart for a partnership that is leading to a new playground at the Alfond Youth Center.

"This partnership stands out as a tremendous resource for youth," said Governor Baldacci. "From the high quality, licensed child care program to the many opportunities to engage youth in civic and athletic endeavors, the Youth Center is making a difference in supporting children and families in this region. I want to thank Walmart for its commitment to the young people of this region and across the State and for being a valued corporate partner."

The Governor said the $40,000 donation from Walmart will help the mission of the Alfond Center to provide opportunities to get kids outside and exercise, helping them keep healthy and engaged with their peers.

"These are the kinds of partnerships that make Maine so special," said the Governor. "Supporting our children is everyone's job. Working together, we'll ensure a brighter future for all our children and for our State."

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Maine Recognized for Leadership in Energy Efficiency

October 21, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Governor John E. Baldacci today spoke about Maine's aggressive energy independence and security agenda at an event sponsored by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. Maine was recognized at the unveiling of the Council's annual state scorecard, which ranks states based on implementation of energy efficiency programs. Maine and Delaware were ranked most-improved over the past year; Maine moved up from 19th to 10th in the rankings.

"In Maine, we recognize that we must make efficiency a priority while also aggressively pursuing the development of alternative energy resources. We began this commitment in 2003 when the price of oil was $20 a barrel," said Governor Baldacci.

"We made State government a model in order to show businesses and residents that reducing energy consumption improves our way of life by reducing harmful effects on our environment and our health, while making a significant impact to our bottom line," said the Governor. "Since then, we've made new investments in weatherization, encouraged alternative modes of transportation and voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, and we became the first state to purchase 100 percent of our electricity from zero carbon renewable resources."

Maine has achieved substantial results in addressing energy efficiency. In the past year alone, the Efficiency Maine Business Program has helped 690 Maine businesses complete more than 900 energy efficiency projects, realizing a total economic benefit of $54 million in avoided electrical costs. Maine has incentivized the purchase of CFL light bulbs. Last year 1.1 million CFLs were sold in Maine, a 38 percent increase over the past year. And we are creating jobs through training of hundreds of energy auditors and weatherization technicians.

This year, legislation was passed to further Maine's energy efficiency goals. The comprehensive energy package included:

• Creating a one-stop-shop for all of the State's energy rebate, efficiency and conservation programs;

• Establishing the goal to weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030; to reduce peak electric energy consumption by 100 Megawatts by 2020; and to reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030;

• Establishing a statewide building and energy code for all new residences built in the State; and

• Creating a fund to rehabilitate affordable housing, making the units more energy efficient, affordable and available.

The State has engaged stakeholders and the public, holding energy efficiency summits and town hall meetings to show people and businesses about simple steps they can take to weatherize their buildings are reduce energy consumption.

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The Governor recognized the important support of the Maine Legislature and the partnership between Maine agencies, nonprofits and private industry to address energy efficiency.

In addition to promoting energy efficiency, the Governor has moved to build Maine's renewable energy portfolio. Developing the renewable energy sector in Maine will lead to economic development opportunities and job creation. Among recent achievements, last week the University of Maine and Consortium partners were awarded $8 million of Federal Recovery Act funds to expand efforts to develop offshore wind capacity.

"I'm proud of the achievements we have made in Maine, and proud of the legacy that we are leaving for future generations," said Governor Baldacci. "I thank the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy for recognizing the work we are doing in Maine. We will continue our efforts to build a more secure and sustainable energy future."

"I want to thank Secretary Chu and the Obama Administration for their tremendous commitment to research, development and implementation of renewable technology and especially offshore wind technology," said Governor Baldacci. "I also want to thank the Maine Congressional delegation and acknowledge our bipartisan efforts to promote clean, home-grown energy development in Maine."

The Governor also met today with U.S. Department of Energy officials regarding climate change.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy report can be found at the link http://www.aceee.org/

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Recovery Act Creates Thousands of Jobs, Directly Benefits Mainers

October 22, 2009

Maine's First Quarterly Reports Are Available for Review

AUGUSTA – The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is putting thousands of Mainers to work, improving vital State infrastructure and helping families through the toughest economic period since the Great Depression, Governor John E. Baldacci said today.

At the end of the first reporting period for the Recovery Act, more than 3,400 people have been directly employed in Maine by transportation and water infrastructure projects alone. Hundreds of other jobs have been created or saved by Recovery Act funding for health care, education, housing and other project areas.

"In just its first six months, the Recovery Act has created thousands of jobs, saved many more and paid direct benefits to Maine families that have helped them through the most challenging economy of our time," Governor Baldacci said. "People are working today because of the Recovery Act and hundreds of thousands more have received tax breaks, received extended unemployment insurance and had their health insurance protected."

In addition to Recovery Act dollars that flowed through State agencies, more than 5,000 Mainers applied for the first-time homebuyers credit, which was expanded by the law. Maine residents have also received $73.5 million in additional Unemployment Insurance compensation, and about 500,000 Maine families benefited from the "Making Work Pay" tax credit.

"The Recovery Act has made a real difference to Maine families," Governor Baldacci said.

States were required to make their first reports on Recovery Act spending to the federal government on Oct. 10. States had until midnight on Oct. 21 to review and revise the information. Maine's reports are available today. They will become available from the federal government on Oct. 30.

Section 1512 of the Act lays out reporting responsibilities for States. Included in the release today is an overview of reporting from Maine and the individual 1512 reports.

"From the beginning, I have placed the highest priority on ensuring that taxpayers can see how their money is being spent," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine is committed to the highest level of transparency and accountability."

Ryan Low, Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services and Maine's Coordinator of Recovery Funds will be available at 1:30 p.m. today at the Department of Administrative and Financial Services on the 3rd Floor of the Cross Office Building in Augusta to answer additional questions.

An overview of the Recovery Act at Work in Maine and the individual 1512 reports are available at www.maine.gov/recovery

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Governor Addresses Pulp and Paper Association

October 22, 2009

DEDHAM – Governor John E. Baldacci addressed the 2009 Maine Pulp & Paper Association Annual Meeting this morning this morning, delivering a message of opportunities ahead to benefit the industry and the State of Maine.

"The forest products industry remains the largest manufacturing sector in our economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Papermaking is a vital part of that industry, which is why we have been proactive in taking steps to make sure that we remain competitive. Today, this sector is making more paper, more efficiently. Maine continues to provide products for niche markets as a result of this industry's progressive efforts to participate in third-party certification programs. Maine's forests are the envy of the nation, and can and will support papermaking, emerging forest products industries and a tourism and recreation economy."

The Governor outlined the critical steps that have been made during his administration that have supported the pulp and paper industry. Among the improvements have been:

o Stabilizing funding for BETR;

o Supporting employment tax increment financing (TIFs);

o Repealing the personal property tax for business equipment;

o Instituting the Pine Tree Zone program;

o Working aggressively to keep four mills open and keeping Maine people working; and

o Appointing a liaison to the industry to engage with industry and mill officials to keep machines operating.

"We took these steps because the pulp and paper industry is vital to Maine's economy," said the Governor. "Our State's identity is inseparable from its natural resources. Maine's woods have long been both our brand and our lifeline."

The Governor recognized the challenges that are before the industry, but noted that key partnerships have been formed to sustain and grow this important sector of the economy.

"My administration is working with federal conservation and energy agencies, the forest products industry, landowners and the conservation community to chart a new course," said the Governor. "Maine has a unique opportunity to sustain and grow its economy by providing Maine people and industry with low-cost, home-grown, renewable energy. We will maintain a stable and sustainable wood supply, and we will secure and enhance Maine's unparalleled recreational opportunities."

In particular, the Governor highlighted his administration's efforts to develop new, clean sources of energy. He said a strong mix of resources – including wind, biomass, solar, hydro and tidal – should be harnessed. Energy independence holds the promise to reduce pollution while lowering costs and removing the grip held over Maine industries by foreign sources of energy.

"Now is the time to look to the future and act boldly," concluded the Governor. "For well over a century, stewards have managed our forests for the long-term benefit of its citizens and the State's economy. That spirit is alive and well in Maine. I think of men and women like Keith Van Scotter, Mike Jackson and Lynn Tilton who are bringing innovative ideas into Maine's traditional industries. And it is alive and well in the men and women who go to work every day to sustain our forests and make the pulp and paper that is so important to our State. Together, we can secure the future of Maine's pulp and paper industry and protect our forest heritage."

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Governor Recognizes Old Town Fuel & Fiber Anniversary

October 22, 2009

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Lynn Tilton, CEO of Patriarch Partners, mill employees and local officials for the celebration of the first year of operation of Old Town Fuel & Fiber.

"I commend Lynn Tilton and the partners who have provided the vision to make this mill a success," said Governor Baldacci. "From day one, Ms. Tilton and her partners expressed a commitment to get this high-quality workforce back on the job. They saw the value of the workforce, the facility, the partnership with the University of Maine, and the ground-breaking work being done here in Old Town, Maine. They saw the great potential of this facility as both a producer of alternative energy and as a pulp mill. I am confident that we will return here for many years to come to celebrate the success of the mill and its people."

The Governor has been active in efforts to keep the mill in Old Town viable and operational. When Georgia-Pacific decided to close the mill, a new buyer and partnership was sought. Red Shield Environmental stepped in, but by June 2008, the mill again faced closure. Patriarch Partners acquired what was to become Old Town Fuel & Fiber a year ago.

"From what we have seen in the last year, the City of Old Town and the State of Maine could not have asked for a better partner than Patriarch Partners," said the Governor. "It has taken a great amount of cooperation from many people to get to where we are today – and I would like to recognize the legislative delegation who is here; the members of the Old Town City Council, City Manager Peggy Daigle, members of the union. Every single one of us had the best interests of the workers as our first priority."

At around 190 employees, Old Town Fuel & Fiber currently employs about the same number of workers at the facility as there were in the summer of 2008.

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Governor: We Will Hold FairPoint Accountable for Obligations

October 26, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement regarding FairPoint Communication's decision to file for bankruptcy.

"The announcement by FairPoint does not come as a surprise. I have been closely watching the developments with the company and tracking its response to significant problems," Governor Baldacci said.

"Last week, I joined with the governors of New Hampshire and Vermont to communicate our concerns and expectations to FairPoint. I remain concerned about the process moving forward."

"My first priority is ensuring that Maine customers and ratepayers are taken care of."

"I spoke with FairPoint CEO David Hauser this morning, and I reiterated that customers must receive the services they expect."

"FairPoint is the backbone of telecommunications in Northern New England, and we will ensure that any restructuring maintains this critical infrastructure."

"Hauser told me that the bankruptcy process will allow the company to restructure its debt, which will put it in a better position in terms of day-to-day operations."

"Maine will participate in the bankruptcy hearings to ensure that any restructuring guarantees that FairPoint will maintain its lines and improve customer service, including service to new customers."

"We will also hold them to the promises they made during the acquisition. They have an obligation to expand broadband service, particularly in rural areas."

"Also, Fairpoint's problems are not the fault of the company's workforce. The problems come from the failed integration of technology, high levels of debt and corporate structure. FairPoint's workers are key to making the system work and improving it to the level that we expect."

"We will hold FairPoint responsible for the promises the company has made and hold them accountable for their obligations."

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Governor Participates in Weatherization Efforts

October 28, 2009

FREEPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined People's Regional Opportunity Program and Efficiency Maine to weatherize the home of a low-income homeowner. The event highlighted the federal Recovery Act funds dedicated to weatherization and continuing efforts by the State to promote energy efficiency and development of renewable energy.

"We've worked hard in Maine through our public-private partnerships to make progress in weatherizing homes and businesses because we know that this is critical to keeping people safe while decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels," said Governor Baldacci.

The total amount of weatherization for this year is $28 million. Of that amount, $4.2 million is from the Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program; $16.2 million is from the Recovery Act Weatherization Assistance Program funding; and $7.6 million is from LIHEAP Weatherization.

The Governor, joined by Maine's Congressional Delegation, has consistently advocated for enhanced LIHEAP funding and the Governor established the Keep ME Warm Program in 2005 to help those in need receive assistance during the heating season.

This year the Legislature passed the Governor's comprehensive energy package, An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future, which brings together under one roof Maine's energy rebate, efficiency and conservation programs under the Efficiency Maine Trust. Among other provisions, the law established the goal to weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030, and reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030. Efficiency Maine is developing new programs including financial assistance and a statewide program being launched to support Maine residents and businesses reaching for energy efficiency.

Maine is seen as a leader in the nation both in energy efficiency and pursuit of renewable energy development. The State was recently recognized by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy and by the Federal government for its weatherization efforts and its commitment to energy efficiency. Maine was also recognized earlier this month by the U.S. Department of Energy for its leadership in wind energy research and technology with a major investment to the University of Maine and its consortium to invest in the development of deepwater off-shore wind.

"Maine has earned its reputation as being a leading state in the emerging field of energy efficiency," said the Governor. "Weatherization efforts have enabled us to create jobs while saving residents and businesses money. The federal Recovery Act funds enable us to augment our efforts. Combined, these efforts will improve the health and welfare of Maine citizens, reduce our dependency on costly foreign oil, and put people to work here in Maine."

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Governor Congratulates New Biofuel Business

October 28, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci joined partners Jarmin Kaltsas and Dean Sgouros of Maine Bio-Fuels Inc. to celebrate the new locally-owned and operated biofuel business. The business turns restaurant cooking grease into biodiesel.

"These businessmen are great innovators, representing the entrepreneurial and community-driven spirit that is making Maine a leading state in developing clean, home-grown energy and adding green jobs," said the Governor. "The State of Maine has been working aggressively to expand renewable energy, and today shows that private investment and businesses in Maine are critical in making this goal a reality."

Attending today's event were also representatives from charities and clean energy groups that are working with Maine Bio-Fuels. The Governor said that the company owners, investors and employees are not only committed to clean, renewable energy, but they are community-driven, as well. They are supporters of Habitat for Humanity and have invited University of Maine art students to decorate their tanks. In addition, Maine Bio-Fuels prides itself on being open to the public, encouraging children and other Mainers to drop by the facility to learn more about how biofuels are produced.

Governor Baldacci said that Maine families and businesses need to know that there are growing opportunities like biofuels being produced in the State.

"Alternative fuels will help our environment and our health, increase our energy security, and create good-paying jobs," said the Governor. And it's businesses like Maine Bio-Fuels that will solidify Maine's place as a leader in achieving alternative fuels."

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Governor Renews Civil Emergency Order to Fight Flu, Facilitate School-Based Vaccinations

October 29, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today renewed a Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent. The original proclamation was signed on Sept. 1 and again on Sept. 30.

The proclamation enables the State to continue to better respond to the potential dangers of H1N1 flu and to facilitate a statewide vaccination campaign.

"Providers in our schools, clinics and other facilities are on the front lines of prevention the spread of H1N1," said Governor Baldacci. "Aggressive, responsible vaccination and public education are critical as we address the seasonal and H1N1 flu."

The proclamation protects school districts and other vaccination clinic participants from liability. The proclamation also provides immunity from tort liability for approved health care workers who administer the flu vaccines. The vaccines are voluntary.

The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency continue to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of school supported vaccine clinics for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

On April 29, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order that activated the State's H1N1 Response Committee, which includes the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, MEMA, the Department of Education and the Governor's Office.

The text of the proclamation follows:

Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Maine, and pursuant to the relevant provisions of 37-B M.R.S.A. §§ 703, 741, 742, 743 (2) 784-A and 822, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, renew my Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated September 30, 2009 as follows:

Background and Need

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus and raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 6. Since the initial detection of the virus in March and April, 2009, it has rapidly spread throughout the United States and the world. The 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus is the predominant influenza virus in circulation worldwide and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has predicted a significant increase in cases in the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010. The virus is responsible for nearly 5,000 deaths worldwide, including more than 1,000 deaths in the United States. On October 1, 2009, 2009 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, acting pursuant to her authority under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. §247-d-6, renewed prior April 26, 2009 and July 24, 2009 Departmental determinations that a public health emergency exists nationwide involving 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) which affects or has significant potential to affect national security. Forty-six states, including Maine, are reporting widespread influenza activity at this time. Almost all of the influenza viruses presently circulating have been identified as 2009 H1N1 Influenza A viruses. On October 24, 2009 President Obama declared a national emergency with respect to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A pandemic. Manufacturing delays in the production of 2009 H1N1 Influenza A vaccine have delayed distribution and administration of the vaccine.

To prevent the incidence and severity of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established guidance for the vaccination of at risk populations, based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. With respect to seasonal influenza, it is recommended that all children between the ages of 6 months and 19 years be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. With respect to 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), it is recommended that the entire U.S. population be vaccinated, with initial vaccination afforded to high risk groups defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Funding for the seasonal influenza vaccination is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Funding for the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is provided by the federal government.

Several state agencies are involved in the administration of statewide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccinations. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education are organizing a statewide campaign to provide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination to children and the general public in school based clinics and other public vaccination sites. As the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine has become available, the Maine Center for Disease Control is coordinating and facilitating the distribution and administration of the vaccine throughout the State of Maine in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine production delays will necessitate an intensive effort to distribute and administer the vaccine in Maine once adequate supplies are available.

The availability of statewide vaccination clinics for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) is threatened due to concerns about potential liability relating to the administration of the vaccines. These current conditions, including the imminent threat of influenza pandemic, constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of the people of the State of Maine and constitute a civil emergency or disaster within the meaning of the relevant emergency management statutes.

Mission and Scope

To respond to the current public health emergency, I order and declare the following:

A. Civil emergency is imminent, caused by the public health emergency.

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B. The Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education shall coordinate with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency to identify those health care workers duly licensed and authorized to administer influenza vaccines in the State of Maine who are able and available to participate in the planned vaccinations for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1).

C. The Maine Center for Disease Control, Department of Education and Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate and facilitate the establishment, implementation, administration and operation of vaccination clinics in school-based settings and other publicly accessible sites in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

D. The relevant provisions of the Maine Pandemic Influenza Plan will be activated to facilitate the distribution and administration of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines.

E. To the extent necessary to assure the timely provision of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education, the Maine Emergency Management Agency will exercise its authority pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A to designate appropriate health care workers licensed in this State and authorized to administer influenza vaccines to participate in vaccination clinics in accordance with the requirements of this Proclamation.

F. All persons designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to participate in vaccine administration pursuant to Paragraph E shall, pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A, be deemed to be an employee of the State and entitled to immunity pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §822.

G. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Maine Emergency Management Agency, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education to respond to this public health emergency. A record of such actions, if any, shall be compiled and presented to me by the heads of the affected departments and agencies on a reasonable and timely basis throughout the duration of this Emergency Proclamation.

H. The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate with the federal government to secure all appropriate influenza vaccines related to this public health emergency provided for by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and other federal funds.

Duration

Pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §743, this Emergency Proclamation shall expire thirty (30) days from the date of its signature, unless earlier rescinded by the Executive or upon joint resolution of the Legislature terminating the Emergency Proclamation, or unless extended by subsequent action of the Executive.

Given under my hand this 29th day of

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October, 2009.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

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Governor Baldacci Honors State Employees of the Year

October 30, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning honored 25 State employees during a reception at the Blaine House. The employees were named as "Employee of the Year" within their departments.

"As State Employees, you are among our most valuable resources. You demonstrate deep professional and personal commitment to the people of Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine is a better place to live, work and raise a family because of the excellent performance of State government employees. I'm proud of the quality of service you have provided to the citizens of Maine."

Honorees, along with their family members and commissioners, were at the Blaine House for the 7th annual ceremony. The "Employee of the Year" recipients were nominated by the heads of their departments or agencies for their distinguished service and accomplishments in the service to the State of Maine.

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Governor Baldacci Touts Weatherization Partnerships

November 5, 2009

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Gil Sperling, head of the Office of Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program at the U.S. Department of Energy, to talk about Maine's successful weatherization efforts and ways to collaborate with other public and private partners to expand the State's energy efficiency goals.

The stop of the "Retrofit Roadshow" at the Southern Maine Community College campus highlights the efforts of the Obama Administration to build partnerships with local and state governments, nonprofits, labor unions and businesses. The event brought stakeholders together to discuss ways to increase investments in weatherization. The federal government has identified a goal of retrofitting 100 million homes, which they estimate would save $3.5 billion a year.

"We appreciate the commitment from the President and those joined here today to help Maine people and businesses achieve energy savings and create jobs through weatherization," said Governor Baldacci. "A strong weatherization program will create good jobs for Maine, save families money, help our environment and bolster our national security. It's a win-win for Maine and for the country."

Gil Sperling said that Maine is recognized as a leader in weatherization.

This year the Legislature passed the Governor's comprehensive energy package, An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future, which brings together under one roof Maine's energy rebate, efficiency and conservation programs under the Efficiency Maine Trust. Among other provisions, the law established the goal to weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030, and reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030. Efficiency Maine is developing new programs including financial assistance and a statewide program being launched to support Maine residents and businesses seeking to become more energy efficient.

The Governor said that Maine people recognize the need to increase energy efficiency and end our dependence on foreign oil. A commitment to energy efficiency not only saves families and businesses money, it also powers a green workforce of energy efficiency auditors, weatherization installers and many other design and construction jobs.

"Maine has the highest dependence on imported fossil fuels of any state, one of the coldest winter climates, and a housing stock built in the era of cheap oil," said the Governor. "Fortunately, our people are committed to be part of the solution. We have a strong work ethic and the infrastructure to teach and train professionals to meet the challenge. But it will take a partnership from all sectors. We need to work together to improve our approaches to energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings, and to share that progress with the investors, entrepreneurs and policymakers who can help to grow an American weatherization industry."

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Governor Receives Keeping Maine's Forests Report

November 5, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the Keeping Maine's Forests report from Dr. Bruce Wiersma, former Dean of the University of Maine College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture. Dr. Wiersma, as the Chair of the Keeping Maine's Forests Committee, led the work of a group of 20 representatives of various stakeholders for more than 18 months to produce the report with recommendations on the future of Maine's forests.

"First and foremost, this report recognizes the importance of the health, vitality and significance of Maine's forestlands to Maine people and the economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine has benefited in the past from the partnerships of different groups and interests in Maine on this issue, and that work needs to continue. This report emphasizes that building on the progress of the last decade will be essential for keeping the vast Maine Forest and all the activities it sustains."

The Governor vowed to review the recommendations. A key concept of the findings is that new models for conservation should be explored that build on existing partnerships and trusted conservation and economic development tools that have served us well in the past.

Governor Baldacci said that Maine is well positioned to undertake more concerted efforts to sustain and retain our forestlands. He gave examples of recent efforts at the local level including successful models for "community forests" in places like Grand Lake Stream in Washington County and Amherst in Hancock County. The Millinocket Forest project, funded last week, is another example of community support for sustainable forestlands.

The Governor also said that he is aware of interest at the federal level through Secretary of Agriculture Vilsak and Secretary of Interior Salazar to find new approaches to conservation of forests that respond to the needs of private landowners and state and local partners.

"This report suggests a roadmap for how Maine can effectively respond to this interest at the local, regional, State and national levels in an effective and successful manner," concluded the Governor.

The report is accessible online at www.crsf.umaine.edu

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Governor Mourns Passing of Ival "Bud" Cianchette

November 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of Ival "Bud" Cianchette, one of the founders of Cianbro. Bud and his brothers, Carl, Ken and Chuck, started the construction company in 1949 and just recently celebrated the 60th year of operation.

The Governor said that Bud was a problem solver and a man deeply devoted to family, business and community.

"Bud and his brothers built their family business from scratch, and through difficult times they persevered and grew their company to one of the most successful construction companies in the country, with a reputation for quality workmanship and commitment to excellence at every level," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said he had talked to Bud Cianchette at the Cianbro Eastern Manufacturing Facility in Brewer. Cianbro has expanded its operations to include opportunities in the energy sector, as well. The Governor said that the continuing look to the future is characteristic of the Cianchette family and the business they built.

"I've known the Cianchette family for many years and have great respect for their accomplishments and for their dedication to the State of Maine," said the Governor. "Bud and his family have contributed much to Maine. He is part of one of the great family stories of this State. I extend my prayers to Bud's wife, Priscilla, their family, and to the family of employees of Cianbro."

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Governor Orders Flags Flown at Half-Staff from Nov. 6-11, 2009

November 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ordered the U.S. and the State of Maine flags flown at half-staff from now until sundown on Tuesday, Nov. 10, in memory of the victims of Thursday's shootings at Fort Hood, Texas.

The order is in accordance with an announcement by President Obama that U.S. flags be flown at half-staff during the same time period.

"Maine joins the entire nation in mourning the loss of life at Fort Hood," Governor Baldacci said. "This is a terrible tragedy and our hearts go out to the families of all those who were killed or wounded."

In addition, Governor Baldacci has ordered that the U.S. and State of Maine flags be flown at half-staff on Wednesday, Nov. 11, in honor of U.S. Marine Major Samuel Leigh.

Leigh was killed earlier this month when the helicopter he was in collided with a Coast Guard airplane over the Pacific Ocean. Services for Leigh, who was from Belgrade, are scheduled for Nov. 11.

"I spoke with Major Leigh's father and expressed the deepest sympathies of our State," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine will honor Major Leigh's service and do whatever we can to comfort the family."

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Governor Baldacci Creates Task Force To Help Implement New Medical Marijuana Law

November 6, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an executive order forming a task force to make recommendations on the implementation of a new medical marijuana law approved Tuesday by Maine voters.

"Given the results of Tuesday's election, it's my responsibility to find the most reasonable way to implement the will of the people while also ensuring that we have appropriate safeguards in place to protect public health and safety," Governor Baldacci said. "The law as written has shortcomings that must be addressed."

The task force will include 14 members, including representatives of the Department of Health and Humans Services, law enforcement, the medical community and patient advocates. Two members of the Senate may be appointed by the President of the Senate and two members House of Representatives by the Speaker of the House. In addition, the task force may call upon other experts as necessary.

"It's important that we have a diverse group of people working on this issue," Governor Baldacci said. "Creating a new pharmaceutical distribution system is a complicated undertaking. Our goal is to follow the spirit and intent of the law while avoiding unintended consequences that could create serious problems in the future."

The task force will:

Review the implementation of similar laws in other states; Make recommendations on the implementation of the law in Maine, including recommendations for changes in the enacted law that are deemed necessary to ensure effective implementation and ongoing monitoring of the medical marijuana program, and protection of public health and safety; and Advise the Department of Health and Human Services in its development of proposed rules and fee schedules.

Appointments to the task force have not been finalized. The task force will make its recommendations by Dec. 31, 2009.

The text of the Executive Order follows:

04 FY 10/11

November 6, 2009

An Order Establishing the Committee on the Implementation of the Maine Medical Marijuana Act

WHEREAS, it appears that on November 3, 2009 the citizens of Maine approved the Maine Medical Marijuana Act; and

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WHEREAS, the Act specifies short timelines for implementation; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous policy and procedural issues involving various interests and stakeholders that must be considered and resolved in order to effectively implement this law;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the creation of the Committee on the Implementation of the Maine Medical Marijuana Act.

Purpose

The Committee is created to perform the following functions:

Review the implementation of similar laws in other states; Make recommendations on the implementation of the law in Maine, including recommendations for changes in the enacted law that are deemed necessary to ensure effective implementation and ongoing monitoring of the medical marijuana program, and protection of public health and safety; and Advise the Department of Health and Human Services in its development of proposed rules and fee schedules.

Membership and Support

The Committee shall consist of fourteen members, ten of whom are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services or her designee shall serve as chair.

The Committee Members appointed by the Governor shall include:

A representative of the Department of Health and Human Services

A representative of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation

A representative of the Department of Public Safety

A representative of the Attorney General's Office

A representative of patients who would be qualifying patients under the direct initiative

A representative of physicians

A supporter of the Direct Initiative "An Act to Establish the Maine Medical Marijuana Act"

A representative of the hospice movement in Maine

Two members of the public

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members of the House of Representatives. Members appointed by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

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The Committee may call on representatives of other state agencies or organizations not represented on the Committee to provide limited information or to participate fully in the Committee when, in the Committee's discretion, that person has responsibilities or expertise in a particular area that would be helpful to the work of the Committee. Staff support to the Committee shall be provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and other state agencies as needed.

Procedures

The Committee shall meet at times and places called by the Chair, and shall complete its work and make its recommendations by December 31, 2009. The members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is November 6, 2009.

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Keep ME Warm Brochures Available to Connect Mainers to Energy Tips and Assistance

November 6, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced the sixth year of Keep ME Warm, an outreach initiative to help Maine citizens prepare for the cold winter months. The Governor's Office began distributing Keep ME Warm brochures to partner organizations this week.

"The State of Maine has been working to ensure that residents are able to stay safe in their homes this winter," said Governor Baldacci. "This is another way to get information out to all Mainers about important steps they can take to conserve energy, to obtain energy assistance and to help each other in these difficult times."

A compilation of resources and information on keeping warm this winter is on the State of Maine Web site. The Keep ME Warm brochures specifically point to energy saving tips, the successful 2-1-1 system for energy assistance calls, and ways Mainers can help each other, including donating to the Keep ME Warm Fund and volunteering with a local response team. This year's local response team effort is stronger than ever, serving eligible households across the State.

Governor Baldacci met with U.S. Department of Energy officials as well as business and nonprofit leaders yesterday in South Portland to talk about ways to increase investments in weatherization and energy efficiency. Early in his Administration the Governor identified weatherization and other efforts homeowners and businesses could use to save energy and money.

"A strong weatherization program will create good jobs for Maine, save families money, help our environment and bolster our national security. It's a win-win for Maine and for the country," said the Governor.

The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, in conjunction with the Maine Public Utilities Commission, MaineHousing, Maine Community Action Association, Maine State Planning Office, 2-1-1 Maine, United Ways of Maine, the Maine Commission for Community Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and others have joined in this effort to help Maine citizens. Brochures can be obtained at local Community Action agencies, town offices, certain charitable organizations, Maine CareerCenters and State general assistance offices. Brochures can also be downloaded from the Governor's Web page or by calling the Governor's Office at 287-3531.

Information can also be obtained from the Governor's Web site at http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml

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Governor Celebrates Next Step to Maine Woods Legacy

November 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined representatives of the Appalachian Mountain Club, The Nature Conservancy and others today to celebrate an important next step in building a Maine Woods Legacy. The conservation successes are the 29,500-acre Roach Ponds Tract and the 15,000-acre Moose River Landscape.

"Less than six years ago, I first spoke with you about this vision for the Maine Woods to help protect the values we in Maine have long nurtured and regarded as essential for the ecologic, economic, and cultural health of our great State," said Governor Baldacci. "Today, we celebrate the purchase and permanent protection of the 29,500-acre Roach Ponds tract by the Appalachian Mountain Club and the acquisition and protection by The Nature Conservancy of the 15,000-acre Moose River Preserve."

The Governor and Patrick K. McGowan, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Conservation, said that the acquisitions maintain the critical balance of ecological and economic needs in the Maine Woods.

The easement of the Roach Ponds Tract, held by the Maine Department of Conservation, preserves public access for traditional recreation, protects the land from development, and allows the Appalachian Mountain Club to manage the property in a way that promotes nature-based tourism in Piscataquis County and provides local jobs in the forest products industry. It is a key parcel in what is now a contiguous landscape of nearly 600,000 acres of conservation land open to public recreational use, running from Moosehead Lake to Baxter State Park.

"This gives full meaning to a vision for conserved lands in the 100-Mile Wilderness region for traditional recreational, nature-tourism and sustainably managed forestlands that I spoke of in 2003," said the Governor. "This land and surrounding region will be enjoyed by Maine's residents and visitors for generations to come. This is truly a landmark achievement and a wonderful legacy of collaboration, shared purpose and commitment to the future."

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Governor Announces Student Competition to Expand Maine Students' Engineering Horizons

November 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a unique opportunity for high school students across the State. The Real World Design Challenge enables young people to apply their technical and engineering skills toward a specific project. This year's challenge relates to fuel efficiency in aviation, and is sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration, NASA and several private companies.

Student groups will compete in-state, with the winning team earning a trip to Washington, D.C., for a national competition. Participating teachers will be provided with $1 million worth of software and online professional development. The goal of the program is to build the engineering workforce of the future, including areas of the emerging "green" sector.

"Providing high quality education is the best foundation we can build for our young people and for Maine's future economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Incorporating the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines, the Real World Design Challenge will help give Maine students hands-on experience and enhance their problem-solving skills and will help build our workforce of the future."

STEM jobs are the largest growing sector of Maine's economy and provide the highest wage opportunities. Currently, one in seven Maine jobs are STEM-related and studies show that opportunities will grow because 40 percent of the industries projected to gain jobs in Maine are STEM-related.

The Governor was joined at the State House announcement by representatives of the public and private partners in this program: the FAA, NASA, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Maine Department of Education, and others. Two educators who have signed up student teams participated in the event: David Dorr, Engineering Technology Instructor at Sanford Career and Technology Education Center, and John Kraljic, Technology Education Teacher at Falmouth High School.

"Through the Challenge, all Maine students will have access to the best resources, enabling them to build 21st century skills that will help to make Maine's future workplace more competitive in a globally competitive economic environment," said Dr. Ralph K. Coppola, Director of the Real World Design Challenge.

"The FAA recognizes the importance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) programs such as the Real World Design. The program demonstrates a successful public private partnership that will inspire students across the great state of Maine and provide them an opportunity to develop the STEM skills for the 21st century," said Amy L. Corbett, FAA New England Regional Administrator.

"There are exciting things happening – in energy, the environment and engineering – and that is represented here today by the partners involved in this project, and in the teachers who have already

signed up student teams," said the Governor. "The Real World Design Challenge harnesses young people's knowledge and skills in these areas. The Challenge will bring together education, industry and government to provide a bridge to involve and prepare our youth to enter into STEM careers."

Teachers who are interested in participating in the program need to register their teams by Nov. 16.

More information on the Challenge can be found at http://www.realworlddesignchallenge.org/

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Old Town Canoe Celebrates Expansion

November 10, 2009

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated local officials, the employees of Old Town Canoe and officials from the parent company Johnson Outdoors Inc. during the ribbon cutting of the Gilman Falls Avenue facility. The building now houses the distribution, office and manufacturing of the paddle sports brand operations for Old Town Canoe. The company estimates the 48 jobs will be created in Old Town. The company consolidated its paddle sport brands to its Old Town facility in order to streamline operations and position itself for future growth.

"Old Town Canoe's craftsmanship, quality and brand are known worldwide," said Governor John Baldacci. "Old Town Canoe plays an important role in Maine's boatbuilding history and culture, and the company has earned the reputation for being a valued employer and good corporate citizen. We appreciate the commitment of Johnson Outdoors to Maine workers."

Earlier this year, the State and city had worked on a package of incentives to ensure that the company could meet its efficiency objectives best by expanding its operations in Maine.

According to Johnson Outdoors, Old Town was selected because of its depth of manufacturing capability and capacity for expansion. The Gilman Falls Avenue facility is designed to be more efficient and to reduce energy use.

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Governor Registers Opposition to Proposed Low-Level Military Flights Over Western Maine

November 13, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today registered his opposition to a proposal by the Air National Guard to allow low-level training flights over Western Maine.

A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, in Farmington in the Lincoln Auditorium on the campus of the University of Maine Farmington.

In the letter to the Director of the Air National Guard, Governor Baldacci cites the lack of responsiveness from the National Guard Bureau to questions raised about the proposal to allow the low-level flights.

"I wish to register my opposition to this proposal," Governor Baldacci wrote. "I do not believe that serious consideration has been given to the impacts on the people of Maine nor has the appropriate level of due diligence been conducted in this process and in the Draft (Environmental Impact Statement)."

After the public comment period, a Final Environmental Impact Statement will be completed by the Air National Guard and submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA will then determine if the ANG has done a complete evaluation and whether to accept the analysis of significant impacts and related mitigation plans.

The text of the letter follows:

Harry M. Wyatt III

Lieutenant General, USAF

Director, Air National Guard

National Guard Bureau

1411 Jefferson Davis Highway

Arlington Virginia, 22202-3231

Dear Gen. Wyatt:

The Condor MOA hearing on the Draft EIS (DEIS) is scheduled for this Saturday, November 14, in Farmington, Maine. As you know, I requested a postponement of the hearing for six to nine months in my letter dated August 28, 2009 (attached). In that letter, I also raised a series of questions regarding the safety, noise and environmental impacts of the proposed Condor MOA. These questions were developed jointly by Legislators and citizens of the western mountains, staff at MaineDOT, the Quality of Place Council and the Office of the Attorney General.

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In response, I received correspondence from you dated September 1, 2009, in which rationale is given for doing no further analysis regarding questions of noise, safety and environmental impact. In addition, there is an NGB staff summary sheet that recognizes the Fermata Report and the Brookings Report but suggests that any pertinent findings from those reports will only be included in the Final EIS.

While I am grateful that the Air National Guard postponed the hearing for approximately 60 days, I am deeply disappointed that no further consideration was given to the questions outlined in my letter. I am also disappointed that the findings from the Fermata Study and the Brookings Report were not included in the Draft EIS. Due to the absence of such information, the State is unable to adequately respond to the DRAFT EIS as presented.

I continue to assert that the questions raised in my prior correspondence strongly suggest that more work needs to be done to assure me and the people of Western Maine that no significant impacts will result from the proposed changes to the Condor MOA. As such, I wish to register my opposition to this proposal. I do not believe that serious consideration has been given to the impacts on the people of Maine nor has the appropriate level of due diligence been conducted in this process and in the Draft EIS.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

cc: Attorney General Janet Mills

David A. Cole, MaineDOT Commissioner

General John Libby, DVEM Commissioner

Encl.

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Governor Baldacci Swears In Thaxter Trafton as Acting Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development

November 16, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today swore in Thaxter Trafton as the new Acting Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

"Thaxter Trafton brings exceptional experience and leadership skills to this post, and has a proven track record with Maine's business community," Governor Baldacci said. "He will be a strong advocate for job growth and business development."

Trafton has served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development since 2006. Prior to this, Trafton was the Director of Business Development at the department (from 2003 to 2006).

Trafton also has an extensive private sector background. Before returning to Maine in 2003, he was Chief Administrative Officer of the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority, where he supervised operating agreements with Coliseum sports fanchisees including Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics, the National Football League's Oakland Raiders and the National Basketball Association's Golden State Warriors.

Trafton served as President and Commissioner of the International Basketball League from 1996 to 2001. He has also owned and operated a consulting firm to the entertainment industry, as well as handling operations for a production company for entertainment events.

Trafton was Team President of the Cleveland Cavaliers and Richfield Stadium in Richfield, Ohio, from 1985 to 1989.

Trafton served as Executive Director of the Bass Park Complex in Bangor from 1965 to 1980.

He is a graduate of Husson University in Bangor. He lives in Augusta.

In his acting capacity leading the department, Trafton is charged with developing economic sectors, promoting new businesses, growing existing businesses, and creating economic opportunity for Maine citizens. The department works closely with the Governor, the Legislature, and the private sector to accomplish this mission.

Trafton replaces John Richardson, who resigned to run for Governor.

Governor Baldacci will nominate Trafton as Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development during the next legislative session. Trafton's appointment will be contingent on approval by the Business, Research and Economic Development Committee, and confirmation by the Senate.

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Governor Baldacci Names Task Force to Implement New Medical Marijuana Law

November 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the names of the appointments to the Committee on the Implementation of the Maine Medical Marijuana Act. The Governor created the task force by Executive Order on Nov. 6, following the medical marijuana law approved by Maine voters. The Governor said the task force would advise him on the appropriate way to implement the new law with safeguards to protect public health and safety.

The Governor appointed 10 members of the 14-member task force. In addition, two members of the Senate have been appointed by the President of the Senate and two members House of Representatives by the Speaker of the House.

The following people have been appointed by the Governor, representing the interests as outlined by the Nov. 6 issued Executive Order:

Commissioner Brenda Harvey, Department of Health and Human Services

Commissioner Anne Head, Department of Professional and Financial Regulation

Commissioner Anne Jordan, Department of Public Safety

Attorney General Janet Mills

Faith Benedetti, currently self-employed and former Program Coordinator of the Dayspring AIDS Support Services, representing patients who would be qualifying patients under the direct initiative

Gordon Smith, Executive Vice President, Maine Medical Association, representing physicians

Dan Walker, partner at Preti Flaherty, a supporter of the Direct Initiative "An Act to Establish the Maine Medical Marijuana Act"

Kandyce Powell, Executive Director, Maine Hospice Council, representing the hospice movement in Maine

Ken Altshuler, partner at the firm Childs, Rundlett, Fifield, Shumway & Altshuler, representing the public

John McElwee, retired District Court judge, representing the public

The Legislative Members are Sen. Joe Brannigan and Rep. Anne Perry, chairs of the Health and Human Services Committee, and Sen. Stan Gerzofsky and Rep. Anne Haskell, chairs of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

"This group of people will help the State follow the intent of the law, which Maine voters approved earlier this month," Governor Baldacci said. "There are complicated issues that must be addressed as we

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create a new pharmaceutical distribution system, and we must ensure that these issues are thoughtfully addressed to ensure that the law is followed and that Maine people are protected from any unintended consequences that could create serious problems in the future."

The task force will meet Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15. The task force is charged with reviewing the implementation of similar laws in other states; making recommendations on the implementation of the law in Maine, including recommendations for changes in the enacted law that are deemed necessary to ensure effective implementation and ongoing monitoring of the medical marijuana program, and protection of public health and safety; and advising the Department of Health and Human Services in its development of proposed rules and fee schedules.

The task force will make its recommendations by Dec. 31, 2009.

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Governor Highlights Maine as Premier Location for Wind Power Investments

November 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today escorted executives from Statoil around the State as part of a visit of officials from the Norwegian company. Statoil is working with the University of Maine on potential offshore wind power development.

Company officials, including the head of Statoil's wind power business development, came to Maine to see firsthand the existing capacity and infrastructure, interest and commitment of the State and private partners to develop wind power off Maine's coast. The tour showcased the Cianbro Eastern Manufacturing Facility in Brewer, the Fox Islands Community Wind Project on Vinalhaven, Brunswick Naval Air Station and Bath Iron Works.

Representing Statoil were Knut Aanstad, Head of Business Development for Wind Power; Sjur Bratland, Asset Manager Hywind; and Knut Erik Steen, Technical Manager, Hywind.

Governor Baldacci, with a Maine delegation including Dr. Habib Dagher, Director of the University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composites Center, visited Statoil's deep water wind turbine in the North Sea on Sept. 25. At that time, Statoil's interest in working with the University of Maine was formalized with the signing of a letter of intent.

"Today's visit from Statoil is a critical next step in growing the relationship we established with them just two months ago. I am pleased that the company has shown an interest in investing in Maine and in working with our private partners in the State," said Governor Baldacci.

"We have been creating partnerships at all levels as we pursue our aggressive goal to end our dependence on fossil fuels," said the Governor. "That's why I led a wind power trade mission to Europe, improved regional cooperation, and worked with the Maine Legislature to make the investments and address hurdles to growing renewable energy."

Maine is viewed as a leader in the nation in the pursuit of renewable energy development. The State was recognized in October by the U.S. Department of Energy for its leadership in wind energy research and technology with a $8 million investment to the University of Maine and its consortium to invest in the development of deepwater off-shore wind. The initial research represents the foundation of an effort to ultimately achieve 5 gigawatts of wind power by 2030. Maine has the potential to create and maintain more than 15,000 jobs over the 20 years through the 5 gigawatt plan.

"My administration has worked with the State Legislature, Maine's Congressional delegation and our private sector partners to build the foundation for off-shore wind power," said the Governor. "This is an important part of our overall goal to increase our energy independence and security, provide good-paying jobs and promote clean, renewable, home-grown energy development in Maine."

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Governor Renews Civil Emergency Order to Fight Flu

November 19, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today renewed a Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent. The original proclamation was signed on Sept. 1, with renewed proclamations signed Sept. 30 and again on Oct. 29. The proclamation enables the State to continue to respond to the potential dangers of H1N1 flu and to facilitate a statewide vaccination campaign.

The proclamation recognizes the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization for the use of the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza, enabling expedited distribution and dispensing of the medications to those who have H1N1. The federal authorization enables Federally Qualified Health Centers and other people designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to distribute the antiviral medications in accordance with applicable law to address the H1N1 public health emergency. Federally Qualified Health Centers are therefore added to the list of entities protected from liability in combating H1N1.

School districts and other vaccination clinic participants are again protected from liability under the proclamation. The proclamation also provides immunity from tort liability for approved health care workers who administer the flu vaccines. The vaccines are voluntary.

"The impact of H1N1 in our schools and other facilities has been great," said Governor Baldacci. "Nationwide, the federal Centers for Disease Control estimate that 22 million people have become ill with H1N1, with 98,000 people hospitalized. We need to employ every method we can to ensure that Maine people are protected. We must remain aggressive and vigilant in our prevention and response."

The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency continue to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of school supported vaccine clinics for both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

On April 29, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order that activated the State's H1N1 Response Committee, which includes the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control, MEMA, the Department of Education and the Governor's Office.

The text of the proclamation follows:

Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Maine, and pursuant to the relevant provisions of 37-B M.R.S.A. §§ 703, 741, 742, 743 (2) 784-A and 822, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, renew my Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated October 29, 2009 as follows:

Background and Need

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On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic of the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus and raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 6. Since the initial detection of the virus in March and April, 2009, it has rapidly spread throughout the United States and the world. The 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus is the predominant influenza virus in circulation worldwide and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has predicted a significant increase in cases in the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010. On October 1, 2009, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, acting pursuant to her authority under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. §247-d-6, renewed prior April 26, 2009 and July 24, 2009 Departmental determinations that a public health emergency exists nationwide involving 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) which affects or has significant potential to affect national security. Forty-six states, including Maine, are reporting widespread influenza activity at this time. Almost all of the influenza viruses presently circulating have been identified as 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) viruses. On October 24, 2009 President Obama declared a national emergency with respect to the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic. Manufacturing delays in the production of 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine have delayed distribution and administration of the vaccine. Although over 43 million doses of the vaccine have thus far been distributed, the vaccine shortage has required public health authorities to use a variety of countermeasures to prevent transmission of the influenza. CDC is estimating that approximately 22 million Americans have become ill with 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), 98,000 persons have been hospitalized, and up to 3,900 persons have died from the disease.

To prevent the incidence and severity of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established guidance for the vaccination of at risk populations, based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. With respect to seasonal influenza, it is recommended that all children between the ages of 6 months and 19 years be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. With respect to 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), it is recommended that the entire U.S. population be vaccinated, with initial vaccination afforded to high risk groups defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Funding for the seasonal influenza vaccination is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Funding for the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is provided by the federal government Several state agencies are involved in the administration of statewide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccinations. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education are organizing a statewide campaign to provide seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination to children and the general public in school based clinics and other public vaccination sites. As the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine has become available, the Maine Center for Disease Control is coordinating and facilitating the distribution and administration of the vaccine throughout the State of Maine in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine production delays will necessitate an intensive effort to distribute and administer the vaccine in Maine once adequate supplies are available.

In order to assure appropriate treatment of individuals who contract the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1), the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for the antiviral medications oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza). The Emergency Use

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Authorizations allow these antiviral medications to be used for 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) patients who are either symptomatic or ill enough to require hospitalization. During an emergency, normal prescribing and dispensing requirements may not be satisfied for either Tamiflu or Relenza. The EUAs issued for these antiviral medications authorize distribution or dispensing of the drugs without all of the FDA-required prescription label information, such as patient's name, prescribing physician's name, and date of dispensing. The EUAs also authorize public health officials to distribute Tamiflu and Relenza in accordance with applicable law to address the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) public health emergency.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has authorized the distribution of Tamiflu and Relenza from the Strategic National Stockpile to State public health departments to facilitate treatment for individuals afflicted with the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1). On October 31, 2009, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued an antiviral treatment and prophylaxis authorizing the distribution of Tamiflu and Relenza to Maine's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to facilitate distribution of these antiviral medications to symptomatic individuals who fall within U.S. CDC Influenza A (H1N1) treatment guidelines. Use of the FQHCs is vital in order to assure that necessary antiviral medications are available to individuals in Maine who do not have the financial resources to purchase these medications. To address potential tort liability concerns of those Federally Qualified Health Centers which will be distributing Tamiflu and Relenza to individuals other than their patients, it is necessary to extend tort immunity to these centers in order to assure the rapid distribution of these antiviral medications to persons in need of treatment.

The availability of statewide vaccination clinics for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) is threatened due to concerns about potential liability relating to the administration of the vaccines. These current conditions, including the imminent threat of influenza pandemic, constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of the people of the State of Maine and constitute a civil emergency or disaster within the meaning of the relevant emergency management statutes.

Mission and Scope

To respond to the current public health emergency, I order and declare the following:

A. Civil emergency is imminent, caused by the public health emergency.

B. The Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education shall coordinate with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency to identify those health care workers duly licensed and authorized to administer influenza vaccines in the State of Maine who are able and available to participate in the planned vaccinations for seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1).

C. The Maine Center for Disease Control, Department of Education and Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate and facilitate the establishment, implementation, administration and operation of vaccination clinics in school-based settings and other publicly accessible sites in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

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D. The relevant provisions of the Maine Pandemic Influenza Plan will be activated to facilitate the distribution and administration of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines.

E. To the extent necessary to assure the timely provision of seasonal influenza and 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccination in accordance with the guidance of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education, the Maine Emergency Management Agency will exercise its authority pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A to designate appropriate health care workers licensed in this State and authorized to administer influenza vaccines to participate in vaccination clinics in accordance with the requirements of this Proclamation.

F. To the extent necessary to assure the timely distribution of the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza to individuals considered at high risk for the H1N1 Influenza, the Maine Emergency Management Agency, upon consultation with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, will exercise its authority pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A to designate appropriate health care workers licensed in this State and employed by Federally Qualified Health Centers who participate in the distribution of the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza to individuals in accordance with relevant Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention treatment protocols.

G. All persons designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to participate in vaccine administration pursuant to Paragraph E shall, pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A, be deemed to be an employee of the State and entitled to immunity pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §822.

H. All persons designated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency to participate in the distribution of the antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza pursuant to Paragraph F shall, pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §784-A, be deemed an employee of the State and entitled to immunity pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §822.

I. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Maine Emergency Management Agency, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education to respond to this public health emergency. A record of such actions, if any, shall be compiled and presented to me by the heads of the affected departments and agencies on a reasonable and timely basis throughout the duration of this Emergency Proclamation.

J. The Maine Center for Disease Control, the Department of Education and the Maine Emergency Management Agency shall coordinate with the federal government to secure all appropriate influenza vaccines related to this public health emergency provided for by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and other federal fund

Duration

Pursuant to 37-B M.R.S.A. §743, this Emergency Proclamation shall expire thirty (30) days from the date of its signature, unless earlier rescinded by the Executive or upon joint resolution of the Legislature terminating the Emergency Proclamation, or unless extended by subsequent action of the Executive.

Given under my hand this 19th day of November, 2009.

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John E. Baldacci

Governor

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Governor Baldacci Orders Immediate Spending Reductions

November 20, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued an executive order directing State agencies to cut the rate of spending in the current fiscal year by $63.1 million.

The order, called a curtailment, will help to ensure that the State finishes the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

The effects of the national recession continue to hurt Maine's economy. State revenues have not met expectations during the current fiscal year, falling roughly $93 million below budget to date for fiscal year 2010.

Early estimates suggest State revenues for fiscal years 2010-2011 could be under budget by $400 million or more. The State's Revenue Forecasting Committee meets today to revise its projections. A final report is due by Dec. 1.

"Earlier this year, we passed a bipartisan budget that reduced State spending by $500 million, making it the first budget in at least 35 years that was less than its predecessor," Governor Baldacci said. "It's clear now that we will have to do even more."

"Today's curtailment is another step to reduce State spending. In December, I will submit budget revisions to the Legislature that will make the additional cuts necessary to keep the budget balanced, as required by Maine's Constitution and law," Governor Baldacci said. "I will not support increased taxes to close the budget gap."

Under State law, the Governor has the authority to reduce spending on programs approved by the Legislature with a curtailment order. The curtailment order is temporary and serves to reduce the rate of spending until a supplemental budget can be passed to address the predicted revenue shortfall. The curtailment order applies only to the current fiscal year.

Like Maine, at least 42 states have had to make additional spending cuts after passing their budgets. Even as the recession has begun to end on the national level, States continue to struggle.

In 2009, States had to close budget gaps of $72.7 billion dollars. In 2010, the number is already $113 billion dollars – and growing.

"In Maine, we have a history of fiscal responsibility," Governor Baldacci said. "During the last six and a half years, Maine has reduced the size of government. We have 1,000 fewer State employees, and we have made important structural changes to stretch dollars. Government is leaner, more efficient and more effective. But we have to do more."

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Governor Baldacci will present a supplemental budget for fiscal years 2010-11 to the Legislature in December. The budget will contain many of the cuts implemented by the curtailment, along with additional changes in statute to further reduce State spending to meet the current revenue downturn.

"The current budget situation requires us to take action immediately. Every day we wait makes the budget cuts more severe and more difficult," Governor Baldacci said.

The process to identify the curtailments began when State departments and agencies were assigned reduction targets. Each department or agency presented options and program impact analyses to meet the targets. The proposed reductions were evaluated based on a number of factors, including the effects on public health and safety, the extent that the impact could be minimized and whether the proposal, insofar as practicable, followed the intent of the Legislature.

"As we move forward, we will all have to work together for the greater good of the State," Governor Baldacci said.

Details of the curtailment order can be found at:
www.maine.gov/budget/budgetinfo/2010curtailment.htm

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Governor Baldacci's Thanksgiving Message

November 25, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today wished the people of Maine a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

"Thanksgiving is a true American holiday that draws us home to be in the good company of family and friends," said Governor Baldacci. "In these tough economic times, I am even more inspired by the grace and unselfishness I see everyday. People of this State give of themselves to improve the lives of others. They volunteer countless hours to comfort the sick and to feed the less fortunate. They answer the call when tragedy strikes a neighbor. Even during this time when almost every family is sacrificing to make ends meet, they never forget that we are all stronger when we work together."

In addition, the Governor said that during the holiday season it is more important than ever to be alert on Maine roads. Last year, during the Thanksgiving holiday travel period, nearly 400 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes nationwide, including two in Maine.

"Many people are traveling this weekend, both inside Maine and around the country," said the Governor. "I am proud that this year was the safest on Maine's roads in 50 years. However, I am concerned that in the past two weeks 11 people have died on Maine roads. Many of these deaths can be directly attributed to people driving too fast and not wearing their seatbelts."

The Governor said, "I urge everyone this holiday weekend to drive carefully, don't drive impaired and to buckle up for every trip."

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Governor Recognizes Maine Charity Helping Military Families

December 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed sponsors, volunteers and other supporters of Operation Tribute to the State House to recognize their work on behalf of the children of military families. The Governor proclaimed the month of December 2009 as Operation Tribute Month.

Operation Tribute, based in Gorham, provides holiday gifts to children whose parent or parents are serving in the military. Last year, Operation Tribute distributed more than 8,800 gifts in Maine.

"For children of Guard, Reserves or Active Duty forces serving overseas, missing a parent can be especially hard during the holiday season," said the Governor. "We are lucky in Maine that our communities rally around our soldiers and their families, and this is one very special organization that does just that. They bring smiles to the faces of young people throughout the region."

Though started in Maine, Operation Tribute has expanded its reach to help kids throughout New England and New York. The charity enjoys support from national, regional and state sponsors, and has been supported by local groups like the Gorham High School Key Club, a number of whom were at the State House event today. The Gorham High School Key Club has been reaching out to more than 300 Key Clubs throughout New England and New York, resulting in more than $12,000 in donation to date.

"It's the dedication and commitment of the Key Club and many other volunteers that makes Operation Tribute such a success. I thank everyone who is involved in Operation Tribute and encourage other Maine people during this holiday season to support Operation Tribute and other organizations that are doing important work for our neighbors in our communities," said the Governor.

The proclamation follows.

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2007, Operation Holiday Cheer was launched to provide a holiday gift to each participating child of Maine's military families, including Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserves and National Guard; and

WHEREAS, there are over 9,000 children in the State of Maine that have a parent that serves in the military during the holidays; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, and 2008 Operation Holiday Cheer acquired, gift wrapped and individually distributed over 16,000 holiday gift to each participating military child in over 140 cities and towns throughout the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, each package contained a letter which read: "On behalf of Operation Holiday Cheer and the people of the State of Maine, we would like to offer you this token of our appreciation for your sacrifice. You are the child of a Maine military family and the bravery that you show every day by sharing your parent to help protect our country is being recognized and honored. You should be extremely proud of

your service to our country and should know that we, and the people of Maine, stand proudly beside you. We wish you and your family a Happy Holiday Season."

WHEREAS, in 2008, Operation Holiday Cheer expanded throughout New England and New York, providing over 23,000 holiday gifts to over 800 cities and towns; and

WHEREAS, over 99% of all funds raised were used for the acquisition and distribution of these gifts; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2009 Operation Holiday Cheer changed its name to Operation Tribute to better reflect the mission of providing tribute to the children of military families; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim December, 2009 as

OPERATION TRIBUTE MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

For more information on Operation Tribute, visit http://operationtribute.com/

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Governor Participates in Maine World AIDS Day 2009

December 1, 2009

AUGUSTA – In recognition of World AIDS Day 2009, Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the Maine HIV/AIDS community at an event in the Hall of Flags at the State House.

"We are with you in this fight," said the Governor. "While we have made some very important achievements fighting HIV and AIDS, we know we have a long way to go to eradicate this disease. That's why World AIDS Day is so important. We need to focus on our successes, but we must also be reminded that more than 1,300 people in Maine have received a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS."

The Governor recognized the participants in World AIDS Day as well as others in the community for showing leadership on this issue.

"Leadership can be practiced on a very personal level, too, whether it's taking the initiative to get tested so you and your loved ones know your HIV status, or whether it's encouraging your family and friends to think about HIV and its prevention," said the Governor. "Open up the dialogue about HIV/AIDS and encourage others to get tested, be safe and get involved."

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Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on Saturday, Dec. 5, in Town of Mechanic Falls

December 4, 2009

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Lewis L. Millett Sr., Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, in the Town of Mechanic Falls.

Millett was a Maine native, born in Mechanic Falls in 1920. He served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He was presented with the Medal of Honor for heroically leading a bayonet charge in Korea in 1951.

In addition to his Silver Star and Medal of Honor citations, Colonel Millett received the Distinguished Service Cross, two Legions of Merit, three Bronze Stars, four Purple Hearts, and three Air Medals. He retired in 1973 after serving in the Army for 31 years.

Millett died on Nov. 14 in California and is being buried on Dec. 5 in California.

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Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff for National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – In accordance with the Presidential proclamation and United States Annotated Title 36 designating December 7 as National Pearl Harbor Day and in respect for the victims of Pearl Harbor, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Monday, December 7.

This year marks the sixty-eighth anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. More than 2,400 Americans died in the attack. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day was established to honor those who died in the attack and those who fought in World War II to protect our freedom.

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Governor Recognizes Wreaths Across America and Maine Veterans

December 7, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized Maine veterans and the Wreaths Across America program at a State House ceremony. The kickoff event of Wreaths Across America was sponsored by the Maine Funeral Directors Association and included members of the Sanford High School Chorus, the Hermon High School Junior ROTC, the Civil Air Patrol, members of Veterans Service Organizations and others.

"It's appropriate that we are joined here today on National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day," said Governor Baldacci. "The Wreaths Across America program is a wonderful tribute to the brave men and women who have so honorably served their nation. Our veterans and their families need to know that their sacrifices are recognized and appreciated."

Morrill Worcester began the Arlington Wreath Project 18 years ago and the Wreaths Across America project in 2006 as a way to show respect and gratitude to the men and women who fought for their country. The Arlington Wreath Project uses volunteers to place donated wreaths on tombstones of veterans buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Wreaths Across America seeks to place at least one wreath in each veterans' cemetery in the country.

Governor Baldacci recalled the years he participated in the Arlington Wreath Project when he served as Congressman in Washington, D.C.

"Tens of thousands of wreaths have been donated through this effort," said Governor Baldacci. "This year, those involved with Wreaths Across America anticipate that more than 15,000 wreaths will be placed on graves of our Nation's heroes. This is an important way that we can thank our veterans and show them that their sacrifices will never be forgotten."

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Governor Mourns Passing of Judge Frank Coffin

December 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of Judge Frank Coffin, who had served more than 40 years on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

"Judge Coffin was a compassionate man, a brilliant man and an icon," said the Governor.

The Governor had known Judge Coffin for many years and said he admired the Judge's strength of intellect and dedication to the people of Maine.

"Judge Coffin distinguished himself on the bench, setting the bar for judicial temperament," said the Governor. "But he will also be remembered for his commitment to quality legal representation for Maine people. He connected with everyday working people, especially low-income families. His dedication to upholding the law and strengthening our State established him as a role model. He will be greatly missed."

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Governor Nominates Educare Center for Federal Center of Excellence Award

December 8, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has nominated the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program's (KVCAP) Head Start for the federal Center of Excellence in Early Childhood award. Programs that are chosen to receive the federal award will receive $200,000 a year for three to five years.

Under the Federal Head Start Act, and as one of the priority education and health and human services funding areas related to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), the Center of Excellence award will be granted to a small handful of states. Nominations come from each state's governor.

"I am pleased to nominate the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program's Head Start for this major federal award," said Governor Baldacci. "In particular, I'm encouraged by the groundbreaking work and partnerships undertaken to create the Educare Center at the facility. This Center will offer a high-quality, comprehensive early learning program that will serve up to 200 Head Start-eligible children and their families annually as well as a small number of mixed-income families year-round."

"We could not be more honored by the Governor's nomination, and from the support of our Head Start colleagues across the state," says Kathy Colfer, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program's (KVCAP) Head Start Director and member of the Educare Central Maine Governance Board.

Members of the Maine Head Start Directors Association unanimously recommended that Governor Baldacci nominate KVCAP's Head Start Program in part because of its long history of program collaboration and excellence. The Association also recognized KVCAP Head Start's partnership with Waterville Public Schools and the William and Joan Alfond Foundation to open and operate Educare Central Maine.

Educare is a unique partnership between state and local government, private investors, and state and national foundations to fund the construction phase. Once the facility is built, the operational program will be managed by and sustained through existing federal and state funds that flow through Waterville Public School and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program's Head Start for the purpose of serving families eligible for Head Start and meeting the free and reduced lunch criteria of low-income including children with Autism and special needs.

Educare Centers are uniquely designed to support the young child's social, emotional, and cognitive development during these most critical years of learning under the care and instruction of well-qualified staff: all classroom teachers hold bachelor's degrees and are supervised by master's level supervisors. Educational classrooms are organized as "community neighborhoods." Each neighborhood includes an infant and toddler room (birth to age 3) and preschool (ages 4-5) room creating continuity between and among staff and children as they develop and grow in the program together.

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The Educare Center will serve as a state-of-the-art professional development and resource center for child care professionals across the state, as well as a teaching lab for students seeking a degree in early childhood. There is great promise for Educare to serve as a rural model for replication in Maine and nationally.

First Lady Karen Baldacci, who has been involved in raising one-time capital campaign funds for the facility, noted that the other Head Start leaders see Educare Central Maine as a unique opportunity from which they, too, will benefit. "Educare Central Maine will not only benefit hundreds of children and families locally each year, but it will also be a demonstration site for best practices in early childhood instruction, service delivery, resource coordination, research and evaluation, parent support, and professional development. It will support our platform for policy change in Maine," said Mrs. Baldacci.

On June 25, 2009, the Governor and First Lady, state legislators, philanthropists and donors Doris Buffett and Bill and Joan Alfond as well as other members of the Alfond family kicked-off the construction phase of the early learning center located next to the George J. Mitchell Elementary School in Waterville.

Doris Buffett inspired the Maine public-private Educare partnership by committing $3 million as seed funds toward Maine's first Educare Center facility, as a demonstration site for the highest standards of quality with an additional $1 million from the Bounce Learning Network, the national Educare partnership providing technical assistance and evaluation and policy change support to all Educare centers. The William and Joan Alfond Foundation has provided $2 million to be matched by the final $4 million to complete construction and create a start-up endowment. The Governor, with support of the Maine Legislature, invested $2 million toward the Alfond match from the federal Recovery Act funds.

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Governor Highlights Maine's Energy Leadership at World Affairs Council of Maine Breakfast

December 8, 2009

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke this morning to World Affairs Council members and others attending the Governor's International Breakfast, the theme of which was diversifying Maine's energy resources. The Governor addressed his vision for energy independence.

"I believe it is absolutely imperative that we diversify Maine's energy resources. Our economic future demands it; our environmental future demands it; and our national security demands it," said the Governor. "Energy efficiency and clean energy development will produce investments and jobs right here in Maine."

The Governor outlined the steps his Administration has taken in the past seven years to comprehensively address energy issues, beginning with establishing the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security when the price of oil was just $20 a barrel.

"I knew then that for Maine businesses to be successful and to lay a solid foundation for economic growth for Maine people, we had to address the cost and type of energy sources," said the Governor.

Governor Baldacci made State Government a laboratory for decreasing fossil fuels and establishing energy efficiency standards. The Governor established partnerships to help weatherize residences and has been promoting private industry growth in the area of clean energy development.

"Renewable energy, especially Maine renewable energy, is a cornerstone of my energy agenda, and we have worked to aggressively move forward to make Maine a leader in harnessing clean, renewable sources of energy – including wind," said the Governor.

Maine has established a bold vision of reducing the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030. Maine has set ambitious but achievable targets for development of wind power.

"To meet these goals, we have been aggressive in our pursuit to become energy self-sufficient and to tap our natural resources," said Governor Baldacci. "We have worked with private industry, our Congressional Delegation, the U.S. Department of Energy, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. We have led trade missions and reached across Maine communities to build support and the kind of partnerships necessary to realize our goals."

Already, Maine is home to 95 percent of the operating on-shore wind capacity in New England.

The Governor and the Maine Congressional Delegation have been working with the U.S. Department of Energy on a proposal for a National Deepwater Offshore Wind Research Center to be located off Maine's coast.

On Oct. 15, the University of Maine and DeepCwind Consortium partners were awarded $8 million of Federal Recovery Act funds to expand efforts to develop offshore wind capacity.

The Governor led a trade mission to Spain and Germany earlier this autumn that focused on wind energy development, helping Maine businesses connect with potential international investors and partners.

The State has invited the Norwegian company, Statoil, to partner with the State of Maine in developing a commercial deepwater wind turbine off Maine's coast by 2012.

"We have taken bold steps to build our wind power portfolio," said the Governor. "We continue to look for partners across the globe to join with us and do business in Maine, leading to a brighter economic future and jobs for Maine people.

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Governor Visits Wind Power Technician Training

December 8, 2009

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited the site of a new innovative program that trains Maine workers to be wind turbine technicians. At the Harrison Shrader Enterprises Gould Training Facility, 36 people are currently receiving specialized wind tower rescue and composites training. The project is possible through a federal Recovery Act grant to Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative.

"This partnership of State, federal and private interests is providing critical workforce training in an expanding field," said Governor Baldacci. "These are good-paying, highly skilled jobs in an area in which Maine is leading nationally, and one that we are aggressively pursuing with private partners in the U.S. and abroad."

The North Star Alliance Initiative is contracting with Larkin Enterprises of Lincoln on this training program, which includes tower rescue, repair and composites. The more than $136,000 contract is for training of employees of the companies Larkin Enterprises, First Wind and Lyman Morse. In addition, Larkin Enterprises and eight other Maine businesses have contracts to supply materials and equipment for the four week training program.

The Governor visited the training site after speaking at the World Affairs Council's Governor's International Breakfast. The Governor spoke at the breakfast about the importance of growing renewable energy development here in Maine.

"Our intent is not just to build wind power and other renewable energy just for the sake of it. We know it offers real benefits to our people, as we can see here with this workforce development opportunity," said the Governor. "Investments like the one we see here are crucial to Maine's economic future."

The Maine North Star Alliance Initiative, in partnership with the Advanced Structures and Composites Center at the University of Maine, the Maine Composites Alliance and the Maine Technology Institute, is sponsoring the Maine Wind Industry Seminar Series 2010. The conference runs Jan. 12 – 14 in Portland and is free. Participants will be able to learn more about composite and wind power markets. Registration is open at www.aewc.umaine.edu

The Governor said that wind power development will make our country and State more secure.

"It will create good-paying, green jobs," said the Governor. "It will help lower and stabilize energy costs for industry and consumers, and spark the innovations to make Maine a leader in the development of wind power technologies."

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State Government to Close at 12:30 p.m. Today, Except in Aroostook County

December 9, 2009

AUGUSTA – Maine State Government offices, with the exception of those in Aroostook County, will close at 12:30 p.m. today, Wednesday, Dec. 9, due to a winter storm that began to hit the State this morning.

The storm is expected to increase in intensity, with greater accumulation of snow and high winds.

"We must balance the expectation that Maine people have to access government services with public safety," said Governor Baldacci. "The early release for most of the State is a responsible reaction to the poor weather conditions."

The Governor will continue to monitor the storm throughout the duration of the event and its aftermath.

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Maine Recognized for Weatherization Efforts

December 14, 2009

PORTLAND – Officials from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) joined Governor John E. Baldacci Monday to recognize Maine for running one of the strongest weatherization programs in the country. At a Portland home where weatherization improvements have been made, the federal representatives said that Maine has a model program.

"We think state policies will determine a lot of the success of our nation's energy conservation efforts, and Maine's weatherization program and energy policies are among the most ambitious and strongest in the country," said Gil Sperling, a senior policy advisor for DOE.

Governor Baldacci said DOE funding, including $42 million that MaineHousing is receiving under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), are helping the State achieve its energy goals.

"We know that to be successful in reducing the cost of energy, reducing carbon emissions and growing jobs, we need to both expand weatherization and encourage renewable energy development," said the Governor. "Weatherization efforts have enabled us to create jobs while saving residents and businesses money. Through the Recovery Act our ongoing efforts are receiving an important and timely boost."

This year the Legislature passed the Governor's comprehensive energy package, An Act Regarding Maine's Energy Future, which established the goal to weatherize all residences and 50 percent of businesses by 2030 and reduce the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030.

DOE officials said Maine excels in home weatherization because of its commitment to weatherize all homes, strong support from policy leaders and community action agencies, a capable infrastructure of industry partners and its historically strong weatherization program.

Monday's event took place at a Portland home that was weatherized by Biosafe Environmental Services Inc. Biosafe is a private contractor that the People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP) and the York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) have hired to perform weatherization work in the Cumberland and York county regions. PROP, YCCAC, and the other state Community Action Program (CAP) agencies are important partners in delivering weatherization services to Maine people.

"The proven track record of successful weatherization projects by Maine's Community Action Agencies enabled us to act quickly in response to the Recovery Act," said Suzanne McCormick, President and CEO of PROP. "Because of our long weatherization history, we were able to ramp up quickly and hit the ground running. That means more Maine families will benefit before the worst of the winter weather arrives."

MaineHousing allocated the Recovery Act funding among Maine's CAPs. MaineHousing officials said that the agencies have hired 55 additional staff and more than 30 private contractors for weatherization work, helping achieve one of the Recovery Act's goals of creating more employment.

"Maine, which has among the highest energy burdens in the country, has strong leadership and infrastructure for getting the weatherization job done, including having an exemplary working relationship with federal, state, regional and local agencies," said DOE's Peter Roehrig, Special Assistant in the Office of Energy efficiency and Renewable Energy.

For more information on weatherization and Maine's other energy efficiency efforts, visit www.mainehousing.org and http://www.efficiencymaine.com/

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Governor Receives Wind Energy Demonstration Sites Report

December 15, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today received from the Maine State Planning Office and Maine Department of Conservation the results of a search process to identify demonstration sites for offshore wind technology located in Maine coastal waters. Three sites were identified by the process, which included reviewing the geography of the coast to meet certain parameters and extensive meetings with stakeholders. The sites are off Monhegan Island, Boon Island and Damariscove Island.

"Maine has great potential to be the leader in offshore wind development, and the selection of the demonstration sites is an important step toward that goal," said Governor Baldacci. "I want to thank this team that has conducted an extensive outreach effort. They ensured that all voices were heard throughout this selection process."

The team from the State agencies traveled up and down the coast of Maine over the last four months talking with fishermen, citizens, local officials and others to determine the best areas to take advantage of Maine's amazing offshore resources.

The site off Monhegan Island will be used by a consortium led by Dr. Habib Dagher and his team at the University of Maine. The University-led consortium was recently awarded an $8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy for this project. According to Dr. Dagher, the consortium includes more than 30 partners, including private companies interested in offshore wind development.

Maine has been recognized as a leader in wind energy development. There are currently 300 megawatts operating or under construction in Maine, with another 450 megawatts of wind in various stages of development throughout the State. Already, Maine is home to 95 percent of the operating on-shore wind capacity in New England.

The Governor said that the potential of our offshore wind resources is even greater, estimated at 100 gigawatts, or three-to-four times the current peak demand for all of New England.

Maine has established a bold vision of reducing the State's consumption of liquid fossil fuels by at least 30 percent by 2030. Maine has set ambitious but achievable targets for development of wind power.

"The willingness to move forward is a significant investment in this State's future as a leader in renewable energy," said Governor Baldacci. "Clean energy development will reap investments and jobs right here in Maine."

The University has the goal for the first demonstration turbine to be operating in the water in 2011. The remaining two sites that are available for demonstrations of offshore wind or wave energy technology are available to developers, who must begin the process by obtaining an expedited permit through the Department of Environmental Protection.

More information, including maps of the demonstration sites, are available at www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/oceanenergy/oceanenergy.shtml

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Governor Presents State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals

December 15, 2009

HERMON - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to more than a dozen veterans during a ceremony at an assembly of all the students of Hermon High School. The veterans are former prisoners of war and Purple Heart recipients. The medal was first awarded to Maine veterans in August 2006, and is presented to those who have been wounded while serving their country and former POWs.

"It as an honor to be here to present these medals to our veterans," Governor Baldacci said. "Some of the men who have joined us to be recognized for their heroism served in World War II, and we have others who served in the Iraq War, and still more that served in between. That's more than 60 years of service. To these veterans, your service to your country and your sacrifices for our freedom will never be forgotten."

Since Governor Baldacci first dedicated the Silver Star Honorable Service Medal for veterans wounded in combat and former Prisoners of War, more than 800 Silver Star Medals have been presented to Maine veterans.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

Prisoners of War

SSG Walter P. DeWitt, Army, Germany, Bradford

S/Sgt George T. Hodgins, Army AC, Germany, Brewer

S/Sgt James R. Merritt, Army, Germany, Orono

PFC Carleton F. Willey, Army, Germany, Hampden

Purple Heart Recipients

PVT Andrew S. Clark, Army, April 1951, Korea, Plymouth

SGT Kendrick B. Sawyer Jr., USMC, Dec. 1950, Korea, Bangor

CT1 Richard E. Carlson, Navy, June 1967, USS Liberty, Winterport

SGT Llewellyn C. Cy, Army, May 1969, Vietnam, Carmel

SP4 Richard W. Grant, Army, Sep. 1967, Vietnam, Glenburn

GMG2 Dwight E. McIntosh, Navy, Feb. 1969, Vietnam, Levant

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SP5 Roger G. Michaud, Army, June 1970, Vietnam, Hermon

SGT Timothy D. Hendsbee, Army NG, June 2004, Iraq, Glenburn

SPC Darren A. Ripley, Army, April and June 2004, Iraq, Bangor

SGT David W. Walker, Army, Iraq, Brewer

Individuals Honored Who Could Not Be at Today's Ceremony

PVT Crawford W. Carter, Army, POW, Germany, Etna

PVT Roland E. French, Army, POW, Germany, Bangor

PVT John B. Tivnan, Army, POW, Germany, Newburg

T/Sgt William See Jr., Army AC, POW, Germany, Newport

PFC Richard F. Proulx, Army, Jan. 1945, Germany, Hampden

SP4 Frank A. Crossman, Army, Jan. 1971, Vietnam, Stetson

SGT Charles B. Palmer, USMC, Vietnam, Hampden

SP4 Roger A. Stanley, Army, March 1969, Vietnam, LaGrange

PFC Leonard W. Stratton, USMC, April 1965, Dominican Republic, Corinna

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Maine Receives Critical Federal Funds for Broadband Expansion

December 17, 2009

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci thanked the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke for traveling to Maine today to announce a $25.4 million federal Recovery Act grant to expand high-speed Internet service to rural areas of the State. The Secretary was in Orono and Bangor to highlight the grant, called the "Three Ring Binder" Middle Mile Project. The project is led by GWI of Biddeford. It was one of a number of proposals supported by the Governor in a letter to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in October.

"This federal Recovery Act funding will help Maine people across the State access technologies that are critical to our educational aspirations, our health, and certainly our workforce development and economy," said Governor Baldacci. "We know Maine people can successfully compete anywhere in the world, but to realize opportunities and grow jobs, we need to ensure that Mainers have access to the latest technology, including high speed broadband connections. That's why I have made high-speed broadband development a priority of my administration. This $25 million grant will provide a significant boost to the State's efforts."

The federal funds will support a large portion of the total project cost, which is estimated to be $31.75 million. The remaining balance of the total project cost - $6.35 million - will be paid by private investors.

The project will bring benefits in construction and jobs, and will consist of 1,100 miles of "dark fiber" installed through western, eastern and northern areas of the State. The middle mile infrastructure will be open to all providers. There are 10 Internet Service Providers that have expressed interest in purchasing or leasing space in order to provide service to homes, businesses and community anchor institutions, such as hospital, schools and libraries. The Governor has asked Dick Thompson, his designee on federal Recovery Act Broadband matters, to ensure that the project makes the most effective and efficient use of the taxpayer dollars by eliminating overlaps and duplication of infrastructure.

Secretary Locke said that this grant announcement – one of the largest made today - is one of 18, with more awards to come in the next few months.

The Governor recognized the partnership that was critical in moving this proposal forward, including the Obama Administration, Maine's Congressional Delegation, the ConnectME Authority, the Broadband Strategy Council, and the other public-private partners.

"I appreciate GWI's efforts to bring together a broad array of interests, including Maine businesses, libraries, hospitals and Internet providers, to develop this plan, and I look forward to seeing real results on the ground. These are important investments in our State."

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Governor Signs Order Allowing Larger Trucks on Interstate

December 17, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a proclamation declaring a State of Emergency that will allow an immediate change in truck weight limits on Maine's Interstate highway system.

"Moving heavy truck traffic off Maine's secondary roads and onto the Interstate that was built to handle them is a matter of public safety," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has been working for years on this issue. Now that the President and Congress have acted, we cannot wait to make the change. Every day we keep these trucks on small, secondary roads we increase the risk to the public."

Before the Governor's proclamation, almost 300 miles of Maine Interstate was limited to 80,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, despite the fact that there's a 100,000-pound limit on Maine non-Interstate roads, and near or above 100,000-pound limits on roads in surrounding states and provinces.

On Dec. 16, President Obama signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010, which included a provision inserted by Maine Sen. Susan Collins and supported by the State's entire Congressional Delegation that created a one-year pilot program raising weight limits on the Interstate system. Before the federal law change, Maine could not raise its limits.

During the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature, lawmakers unanimously passed a Resolution asking Congress to authorize the 100,000-pound trucks on all of Maine's Interstate Highway System.

The change is expected to make Maine roads significantly safer. According to national statistics, 82 percent of commercial vehicle fatalities occur on non-Interstate roads. By allowing heavier trucks on the limited-access Interstate, the traffic is removed from towns and cities and smaller roads, where they pose a greater risk.

In addition to improving safety, the increased weight limits will help the environment and reduce costs for businesses in the State. According to estimates provided to the Maine Department of Transportation, trucks traveling on the I-95 are 14-21 percent more fuel efficient than the same trucks on secondary roads.

Moving heavy traffic to the Interstate is also expected to reduce wear-and-tear on Maine's secondary roads and reduce bridge and pavement repairs by as much as $2 million per year.

Maine law, as previously prescribed by federal law, limits truck weight on portions of the Interstate to 80,000 pounds. The State of Emergency will allow the higher truck weights until legislation can be adopted in January.

The text of the proclamation follows.

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WHEREAS, trucks on nearly 300 miles of Interstate highway in Maine have been limited by federal law to 80,000 pounds, despite the fact that the weight limit of states and provinces surrounding us, as well as the state's primary and secondary highways, is at or near 100,000 pounds; and

WHEREAS, this disparity in truck weight limits often forces heavier trucks onto the state's primary and secondary highway systems; and

WHEREAS, the state's primary and secondary highway systems are not built to the same structural standards as the Interstate Highway System; and

WHEREAS, a recent study noted that the crash experience of 5- and 6-axle combination trucks was 7 to 10 times higher on Maine's non-Interstate highways than on the Maine Turnpike, which is currently exempted from the federal weight limits; and

WHEREAS, national findings show that rural Interstate highways are 3 to 4 times safer than rural secondary roads; and

WHEREAS, 82% of commercial-vehicle related fatalities in Maine occur on non-Interstate roads, including a recent tragic accident in Aroostook County; and

WHEREAS, a recent study estimated that a federal truck weight exemption would remove an estimated 7.8 million loaded truck-miles of travel from Maine's primary and secondary highway system each year, diverting the traffic to the safer Interstate highway system; and

WHEREAS, the US Congress enacted legislation creating a one-year pilot project to extend the federal truck weight exemption to the entire Maine Interstate Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the one-year pilot begins upon the signing of the legislation by the President; and

WHEREAS, in addition to increased safety, allowing a 100,000 pound 3-axle truck tractor in combination with a tri-axle semi-trailer on the Interstate Highway System could save up to $2 million annually in bridge and pavement costs on the state's primary and secondary highways; and

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this pilot project, a 100,000 pound vehicle is defined as a 3-axle truck tractor in combination with a tri-axle semi-trailer; and

WHEREAS, the federal truck weight exemption would reduce Maine's and the nation's dependence on foreign oil by eliminating the need to divert to less direct routes and increasing payload capacities, thereby reducing the number of truck miles traveled; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Legislature in the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature passed a Resolution asking Congress to authorize the 100,000 pound trucks on all of Maine's Interstate Highway System; and

WHEREAS, Title 29-A §2355 limits axle weights on the Interstate system-based upon 80,000 pounds, this pilot project will allow Maine general axle weight limits to govern axle weight restrictions on the

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interstate system for a 100,000 pound 3-axle truck tractor operating in combination with a tri-axle semi-trailer; and

WHEREAS, during this pilot project existing Maine laws governing 100,000 pound 3-axle truck tractor operating in combination with a tri-axle semi-trailer will apply to the Interstate system; and

WHEREAS, declaration of a State of Emergency enables the State to implement the federal pilot program, thereby increasing safety and lessening the burden on businesses and the State;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B MRSA section 742, and do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists for the entire State of Maine

This Emergency Proclamation shall remain in effect until I have declared the emergency to have terminated, or as otherwise provided by law.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed this proclamation in Augusta this 17th day of December in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Nine

John E. Baldacci

Governor

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Governor Baldacci Presents Plan to Close $438 Million Budget Gap

December 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his plan to close a $438 million budget gap created by declining State revenues.

"We are beginning to see signs that the economy is recovering," Governor Baldacci said. "But unemployment remains high, consumer confidence is low, incomes are down and people remain uneasy. This national recession has been the longest and most severe since the Great Depression, and we feel it at home and at work."

The plan closes a $209 million gap in fiscal year 2010 and a $174 million gap in fiscal year 2011 created when the Revenue Forecasting Committee revised its projections on Dec. 1. It also accounts for $25 million carried forward from fiscal year 2009. In addition, the budget appropriates $30 million for increased costs within State government.

Earlier this year, the Governor and Legislature addressed a $569 million budget gap with the passage of a revised $5.8 billion State budget. Since Dec. 1, 2008, State revenues for the current budget have been reforecast down by $1.1 billion.

With the revisions submitted today, the two-year budget will fall to $5.5 billion. Funding for education, including higher education, accounts for 50.5 percent of the General Fund. The Department of Health and Human Services, including MaineCare, represents 28.6 percent. The remainder of State government represents 20.9 percent.

"These are unprecedented times," Governor Baldacci said. "We must balance the State budget at the same time that the recession is placing increased demands upon government to assist families in need."

The 2010-2011 budget is the first in at least 35 years to be smaller than its predecessor. For context, in 2004 General Fund appropriations totaled $2.64 billion; in 2011, the budget is now proposed at $2.66 billion.

The Governor's plan includes reductions across government, a placeholder for increased federal assistance and the use of one-time tools to bring the budget into balance. No tax increases, new fines or fees are included in the budget revisions.

"We must reduce spending, but government still has a responsibility to its people," Governor Baldacci said. "While we are making significant cuts, we are also working to mitigate them by giving local governments and schools the tools to lower costs."

The plan reduces funding for:

• K-12 and higher education;

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• The Department of Health and Human Services, including rate reductions for many MaineCare service providers;

• All State departments and agencies;

• Municipal Revenue Sharing;

• Critical access hospitals by reducing the reimbursement rate from 109 percent of MaineCare allowable costs to 101 percent;

• The Legislature and Judiciary.

The plan also:

• Adds three State government shutdown days (one in FY 2010; two in FY 2011);

• Increases scrutiny of assets as part of MaineCare eligibility and reduces eligibility income levels for Circuit Breaker;

• Creates a new tax collection program to recover old debt owed to the State;

• Utilizes excess reserves to the retiree health system without impacting benefits or system solvency;

• Recognizes $13.5 million in savings from the hiring freeze implemented by the Governor and savings from lower Workers' Comp rates;

• The Maine Department of Transportation will reorganize its workforce, making it more adaptable and flexible;

• Supports the continued consolidation of county jails and State correctional facilities through the Board of Corrections;

• Consolidates and reorganizes the workload within the mental health program in DHHS to better utilize medical staff;

• Restructures Child Development Services within the Department of Education from 15 regional sites to nine;

• Establishes a process to reorganize the four natural resource agencies (Agriculture, Conservation, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Marine Resources) and to reorganize the Department of Economic and Community Development;

• Reorganizes the bureaus within the Department of Agriculture from four to three.

"We must continue to streamline and reduce the size of State government," Governor Baldacci said. "We cannot use limited resources to support unnecessary administration. Instead, every dollar possible should be directed toward providing services to the people of Maine. We all must recognize that we can't afford the comfortable structures of the past. We must be willing to chart a new course."

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In addition, the plan transfers balances from Other Special Revenue accounts to the General Fund and shifts the due date or timing of payments for several State-funded programs to achieve one-time savings.

"We have used one-time tools to mitigate cuts in education, public safety and health and human services," Governor Baldacci said. "This budget revision makes important structural changes to government that will produce ongoing savings, but it would have been much too severe to close the entire gap with cuts alone."

In addition, the budget revisions include $3.5 million to flat-fund the Board of Corrections at 2010 levels in 2011 and $1.75 million to partially reimburse municipalities for the State share of disaster assistance.

The plan includes a $35 million placeholder for an anticipated increase in federal support for MaineCare.

"I have spoken directly to the Vice President and the White House economic team about this issue. They have assured me that this is a priority for the President," Governor Baldacci said. "I believe our estimate is conservative, and that the President and the Congress recognize the need to extend the higher match rates originally adopted as part of the Recovery Act for at least six months. If, however, Washington does not act, I am prepared to take the necessary steps to keep the budget in balance."

Further supporting the placeholder, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a jobs bill Wednesday night, which includes a six-month extension of the MaineCare funding, in addition to other aid to states. Negotiations are ongoing in the U.S. Senate.

The budget revisions include 44 position eliminations. Since 2003, the State government workforce has been reduced by nearly 1,000 positions, not counting approximately 150 positions that were frozen as part of a retirement incentive created in the spring.

"Unemployment is already a major concern," Governor Baldacci said. "We worked hard to limit the number of layoffs. Unfortunately, it was necessary to increase the number of government shutdown days by three. State workers have been asked to do a lot. They're being asked to do more."

In the last seven years, State government has gotten smaller and more efficient.

Reduced school administrative districts, the unification of county jails and the State corrections system through the Board of Corrections, consolidation of administrative and IT functions within State government and the consolidation of the Department of Health and Human Services are saving millions of dollars for taxpayers while delivering higher quality services.

"My budget proposal includes hard choices and shared sacrifice," Governor Baldacci said. "It's a road we have been down before. But we have never lost sight of our core values, and we won't lose sight of them now. We will maintain the essentials and support job growth. And when our economy begins to escape the shackles of this recession, we will be better positions for recovery."

The text of the budget can be found at: http://www.maine.gov/budget/

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The Governor's prepared remarks for the release of the budget today follows.

Good afternoon.

We're having these budget get-togethers a little too often.

And the news, it seems, gets a little worse every time.

As we approach the holiday season, the details of our country's economic plight are front and center.

And the impact goes beyond the numbers and the bar graphs we've all become accustomed to.

Unemployment and economic uncertainty are taking an increasing toll on our economy and on our families.

It has devastated people looking for work, and hangs like a dark cloud over people who are working.

Consumers are worried about their jobs and their health care.

Businesses are moving with caution and aren't investing.

Incomes are down.

This national recession has been the longest and most severe since the Great Depression, and we feel it at home, and at work.

Since just last year, Maine's revenues have been re-forecast down by $1.1 billion dollars.

Most recently, projections for the rest of 2010 and 2011 were reduced by $383 million dollars.

Taken with a liability from 2009 and with increased funding demands within State government, we must close a gap of $438 million dollars in our current budget.

As I worked on developing this plan, I considered a list of priorities that would help guide my decision making.

My plan would work to lessen the impact on education, public safety and health, and our most vulnerable citizens.

Given that education and health and human services account for about 80 percent of the General Fund budget, there's no way those areas could avoid serious reductions.

But I sought to reduce the impacts and give communities greater flexibility to reduce their costs and to focus their resources on the classroom where they do the most good.

I wish I could say we have eliminated all the hardships in this budget, but we've not.

There are difficult cuts, and we will have to continue our efforts to make government leaner and more efficient.

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I also wanted to avoid including things in the budget that could unnecessarily hurt job creation or hamper economic recovery.

My plan does not increase taxes, fees or fines. I do not believe that working families and businesses can afford a greater burden.

I've always said that a good job is the best social service program, and the family is the best social service agency.

I have tried to find a path forward through these challenging times that protects both.

We are beginning to see signs that the economy is recovering, but states haven't escaped the grips of recession.

Like Maine, more than 30 states are seeing revenues below projections for this year.

Earlier this year, Maine passed a $5.8 billion dollar two-year budget.

It was the first time in at least 35 years that a two-year State budget was smaller than its predecessor.

With the revisions I am submitting today, the budget will fall to $5.5 billion dollars.

To put that in perspective, seven years ago my first budget was about $5.4 billion dollars.

During that same time, we have increased funding for education by hundreds of millions of dollars – even though we have seen student enrollment drop by about 20,000 students.

We have restrained the rest of State government.

With today's revisions, education spending now accounts for more than half of the General Fund of the State budget.

Health and Humans Services is 28.6 percent.

And the rest of State government is 20.9 percent.

Our priority remains our State's children, our neighbors who need help, and public health and safety.

During these unprecedented times, we must balance the State budget at the same time that the recession is placing increased demands upon government to take care of people and families in need.

While funding for Medicaid has been held almost flat and well-below the national average for growth, the program is serving 20,000 more people.

Other programs, like food assistance and unemployment, have grown, and more and more people have fallen on hard times.

But we have no choice. We must reduce State spending further.

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Today's budget revisions include cuts across all agencies and departments in State government.

It reduces municipal revenue sharing, makes changes in provider rates, and adds three additional government shutdown days – taking the total to one per month.

The budget revisions contain a roadmap forward to achieve efficiencies through greater cooperation and consolidation of natural resource agencies.

It realigns the Department of Economic and Community Development to make the agency less centralized and more responsive.

It streamlines the delivery of Child Development Services in the Department of Education from 15 sites to nine.

The Maine Department of Transportation will reorganize its workforce, making it more adaptable and flexible.

It reduces the number of bureaus within the Department of Agriculture from four to three.

And it includes an internal consolidation within DHHS to better utilize medical staff within the mental health program.

These efforts build upon our successes in other areas.

We have already achieved increased efficiencies and savings through:

• The consolidation of the Department of Health and Human Services;

• The consolidation of administrative and IT functions within State government;

• The unification of the administration of county jails and the State corrections system through the Board of Corrections;

• And through school administrative district reform.

But we must make government more efficient.

We cannot use limited resources to support unnecessary administration.

Instead, every dollar possible should be directed toward providing services to the people of Maine.

I've been down this road before, and I know that change is difficult and is often met with opposition.

But we all must recognize that we can't afford the comfortable structures of the past. We must be willing to chart a new course.

We know we can do it.

Consider the Board of Corrections.

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Prior to its creation, county jail costs were growing at an average of 9 percent annually and the State adult corrections budget was growing at 5 percent.

Under the unified system, county jail budgets grew by 1.8 percent in 2009 and half of 1 percent in 2010.

Saving property taxpayers millions of dollars.

And there were even bigger reductions in the adult corrections budget.

The Board of Corrections has saved millions of dollars in state and property taxes.

And it deserves continued support, which is why my budget includes $3.5 million dollars to fund the in 2011.

With this funding, the Board can continue to make the changes necessary to keep our corrections system as a model for performance and government efficiency.

Even as we have worked to reduce costs, we have also maintained our focus on quality. All of Maine's State prisons are highly rated and accredited by the American Correctional Association, an impressive accomplishment.

While my budget contains many difficult cuts in spending, I have also used several one-time tools to reduce the impact of closing a $438 million budget gap.

We will achieve significant budget savings by utilizing excess reserves in the retiree health plan that we have built up in earlier years.

The proposal does not threaten the solvency of the fund and will not impact retiree benefits.

We have also included a $35 million dollar placeholder for increased federal support for Medicaid.

I have spoken directly to the Vice President and the White House economic team about this issue. They have assured me that this is a priority for the President.

In addition, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation Wednesday night that includes additional Medicaid funding and other assistance to states.

I believe our estimate is conservative, and that the President and the Congress recognize the need to extend the higher match rates originally adopted as part of the Recovery Act for at least six months.

If, however, Washington does not act, I am prepared to take the necessary steps to keep the budget in balance.

This is a prudent, responsible and measured approach that avoids causing unnecessary harm and anxiety.

We also will shift the due date or timing of payments for some State programs, which will help avoid worse options.

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I have proposed significant ongoing budget reductions that will begin saving money now and save even more in the future.

These one-time tools are a better alternative than additional, painful cuts.

I began today talking about the impact high joblessness is having on our people and on our economy.

Unemployment is a major concern, and we have worked hard to limit the number of layoffs included in this proposal.

The budget revisions include 44 position eliminations, and also recognize $13.5 million dollars in savings from the hiring freeze I implemented.

Since 2002, the State government workforce has been reduced by nearly 1,000 positions, not counting the retirement incentive created in the spring.

We have shutdown days, and State workers have lost merit raises, longevity pay and must now contribute to the cost of their health insurance.

State workers have been asked to do a lot. They're being asked to do more.

These men and women make easy targets for critics and skeptics alike.

But they are the police on the beat, the search and rescuers, the first responders and compassionate care givers.

They keep us safe, help to create and protect jobs, and make sure that government is working for the people.

You can talk about government in a lot of ways, but essentially it is how we, as a people, deliver upon the promises we have made to one another.

Regardless of political party, we all want a good education for our kids, to help our neighbors who are struggling and to expand economic opportunity.

Those are the basics. We have to protect them.

My budget proposal includes hard choices and requires shared sacrifice.

It's a road we have been down before.

But we have never lost sight of our core values.

And we won't lose sight of them now.

We will maintain the essentials, and support job growth.

And when our economy begins to escape the shackles of this recession, we will be better positioned for recovery.

We will have a leaner, more efficient government built upon a foundation of fiscal responsibility.

The days and weeks ahead will be difficult. The politics of an election year will be hard to avoid.

But I know that if we are able to put aside partisanship, as we have in the past, and focus on the job at hand, we will be able to do the work we were elected to do.

Thank you.

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Governor Renews Civil Emergency Order to Fight Flu

December 18, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today renewed a Proclamation of Civil Emergency Due to a Highly Infectious Agent. The original proclamation was signed on Sept. 1, with renewed proclamations signed Sept. 30, Oct. 29 and Nov. 19. The proclamation enables the State to continue to respond to the potential dangers of H1N1 flu and to facilitate a statewide vaccination campaign.

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Governor Recognizes Charitable Donation from Maine Company

December 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Today at the State House, Governor John E. Baldacci recognized Tom and Kate Chappell for their significant contribution to Mainers struggling this winter. The Chappells, owners and founders of Ramblers Way, a new natural wool thermal wear company, and former founders of Tom's of Maine, are donating 5,000 pieces of their clothing line to transition teams across the State that have been working with struggling Maine families. The teams will distribute the clothes to needy Mainers.

The Governor thanked the Chappells for working with local and regional support agencies to ensure that some of the Maine people experiencing economic hardship this season can keep warm easier.

"Tom and Kate have long been known in Maine for supporting and strengthening their community, for giving back and showing again and again the kind of example we can proudly point to as good Maine corporate citizens," said Governor Baldacci. "As you are beginning your new business, you've recognized that you can help struggling Mainers can keep warm this winter."

The Governor said that the generosity of the Chappells provides another example of the spirit of the season and the commitment of Maine people across the State to improving the health and welfare of their neighbors and communities.

"We take care of our neighbors," said the Governor. "Maine people and businesses are eager to lend a hand to those in their communities who are having tough times. Mainers look outside to what is happening in their neighborhoods and reach out to help those who are going through hard times right now."

Governor Baldacci cited a number of specific examples of such generosity during the past few months.

• Stephen and Tabitha King recently donated $12,999 to ensure that the Maine Army National Guard soldiers of the 172nd Mountain Infantry Company get to come home for Christmas from training in the mid-west.

• The Coats for Kids, with partners including Hannafords, Shaws, the Salvation Army and others collected tens of thousands of winter coats and jackets for Maine children.

• The United Bikers of Maine held their 28th annual Toy Run this year, bringing smiles to the faces of thousands of Maine kids.

• And through the Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Appeal, hundreds of local and state charities have received significant funds each year for 30 years because of the generosity of Maine State Employees.

Transition Teams across the State – which include volunteers, church organizations, food banks, nonprofits and everyday Mainers – will be distributing the garments that are being supplied by Ramblers Way.

For more information about the Chappells' new company, visit http://www.ramblersway.com/

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State Agencies Closed Thursday

December 23, 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today reminded the public that many Maine State government offices are closed on Thursday, Dec. 24, 2009, as a cost saving initiative for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Biennial State Budget.

"Please plan ahead for any services you may need from State agencies during this and the other State government shutdown days," said Governor Baldacci. "When scheduling the days, every effort has been made to reduce the impact to Maine people, businesses and communities."

The public is encouraged to check with a specific agency before seeking State services on Thursday, Dec. 24, 2009.

The reference to the State closures is Public Law 2009, Chap. 213, Part SSS:

http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chapters/PUBLIC213-PtCtoEnd.asp

This is the fifth of 10 closure days between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010. The other dates that State agencies and offices will be closed are as follows:

Friday, January 15, 2010

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Friday, March 12, 2010

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Friday, May 28, 2010

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Governor Nominates Two to Maine Maritime Academy Board of Trustees

December 30, 2009

Other Nominations Include Baxter School and Several Reappointments

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the following nominations and reappointments.

Dugan Shipway has been nominated to the Maine Maritime Academy Board of Trustees. Victoria Larson has been nominated for reappointment to the Board.

Shipway of Bath is retired. He previously served as President of Bath Iron Works after a 35-year U.S. Navy career. Larson of Windham is Vice President and Program Manager, Infrastructure for TD Bank and served in the U.S. Navy from 1980 until 1998.

The Governor also announced nominations for the School Board of the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf.

Frances Jacques of Berwick has been nominated as a parent of a student at the school. She works at JSR Merchandising in Dover, N.H.

Ryan Banger of Woolwich and Kristy Lavalle of Lisbon have been nominated as student members of the Board.

In addition, the following nominations were also posted today.

Robert Piccone of Portland has been nominated for reappointment to the Maine Labor Relations Board.

Diane Doyle of Saco has been nominated for reappointment to the Land for Maine's Future Board.

John Joseph Jr. of Hallowell has been nominated for reappointment to the Maine Milk Commission.

Richard Stevenson of Bath has been nominated for reappointment to the Board of Pesticide Control.

All the nominations must be approved by the committee of oversight and confirmed by the Senate.

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Thaxter Trafton Nominated to Head Economic Development

December 31, 2009

Governor Nominates Members to MRRA, MTA and NNEPRA

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the following nominations and reappointments.

Thaxter Trafton has been nominated as Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. Trafton has been Acting Commissioner since Nov. 16. He will remain in that capacity until confirmed.

Trafton served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development since 2006. Prior to that, Trafton was the Director of Business Development at the department from 2003 to 2006.

Trafton also has an extensive private sector background. Before returning to Maine in 2003, he was Chief Administrative Officer of the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority, where he supervised operating agreements with Coliseum sports fanchisees including Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics, the National Football League's Oakland Raiders and the National Basketball Association's Golden State Warriors.

The Governor has also nominated four new members to the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority Board of Directors: Rita Armstrong of Freeport; Sally DelGreco of Brunswick; Sande Updegraph of Brunswick and Steven Weems of Brunswick.

Charles Spies III of Topsham has been nominated for reappointment to the MRRA Board.

James Cloutier of Portland has been nominated to the Maine Turnpike Authority Board of Directors.

Martin Eisenstein of Auburn has been nominated for reappointment to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority Board of Directors.

All nominations must be approved by the committee of oversight and confirmed by the Senate.